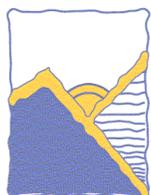


# Partnership Building in Yukon

— for Government, Not-for-Profits  
& Industry Organizations



October 22, 2010



VOLUNTEER  
BÉNÉVOLES  
YUKON



Yukon Literacy  
Coalition

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document is the collective effort of the Yukon Literacy Coalition (YLC) with its partners including delegates of the recent Partnership Forums, volunteer writers, researchers and the Volunteer Yukon (VY). Key sources of information have been drawn from:

- YLC's Partnership Forums - December 2009 and April 2010
- The Library of Volunteer Yukon
- The NWT Literacy Council's "Tools for Community Building Workbook", and
- The Partnership Handbook, sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC).

The intent of this document is to serve as a relevant, practical partnership reference tool. This tool will help organizations review their partnering practices to be better partners.

This Yukon conversation about partnership has also gleaned lessons and insight from partnering experiences in the North and with/in Yukon First Nations communities.

Copies of the NWT Workbook and the HRSDC Handbook can be found through the following web link:

- NWT Literacy Council's "Tools for Community Building Workbook"  
<http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/resources/comdev/tcbwrkbb/tcbwrkbb.pdf>
- Partnership Handbook, sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)  
[www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/sid/cia/partnership/partnerhb\\_e.pdf](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/sid/cia/partnership/partnerhb_e.pdf)

"Partnerships are not new. They have been around for a very long time. What is new is the emphasis being placed on partnerships in so many different aspects of our lives."

*(HRSDC Partnership Handbook)*

## INTRODUCTION

The Yukon is a small region, with significant Euro-Canadian, First Nations and Francophone populations and with many other cultures represented. The Yukon is unique not only as distinguished from southern Canada, but also from other northern regions. There is a small, relatively accessible population in distinct communities. Much of the population lives in Whitehorse where the main employer is government. Yukon has also seen the establishment of numerous First Nations' Governments. There is competition for funding, many traditional partnerships and also traditional challenges that may benefit from positive focus. The distinct communities, climate, multi-cultural richness and beauty of the region encourage the continuation of the dialogue on partnerships.

### Origins of the Partnership Project

The Yukon Literacy Coalition (YLC) promotes active partnerships through many avenues including projects developed in collaboration with partners.

In December 2009, the YLC held the first Partnership Forum, to host partner discussions and build a package that could contribute to relevant, effective and successful Yukon partnerships. The Forum also discussed the tougher side of partnerships and how to work through challenges to get to the benefits of collaborating.

'Growing Partnerships in Yukon' is being developed to help Yukoners improve partnership practices and therefore, success from partnership. This tool has been developed to help all Yukon partners – in all sectors, at all stages, from any level.

An unexpected outcome this work has also been the beginnings of a conversation amongst organizations motivated to partner. Good for the non-profit community and the government. Good for Yukon!

**This document is meant to be used alongside other partnership manuals which contain detailed information about setting up, maintaining, and closing partnerships. IT is meant to provide Yukoners with some basic information about partnerships in our northern context.**

This document will continue to improve with input from Yukon organizations that are committed to effective partnering. All input welcome!

Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) partners with Four Host First Nations (FHFN) during the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games

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Learning Disabilities Association Yukon (LDAY) and Advanced Education – provide services to adults to assist with post secondary education and employment including employment counselling, introductions and training on assistive technology, ADHD

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Partnerships take place either intentionally or by chance. People partner for many reasons:

- Access funding
- Do more with less
- Share resources and reduce costs
- Build community connections
- And so on.

Partners expect that by working together, they can increase their chances for success, tap into one another's skills and abilities, build support, reach a larger audience and/or start long-lasting relationships. Effective partners are clear about their goals, learn from experience, celebrate accomplishments and build new skills.

Ineffective partners don't really understand what they want or need from the partnership. They fail to communicate effectively, don't learn from their mistakes, or know what their role is in the partnership. Challenges in partnerships often arise when:

- Values are different,
- Communication styles are different,
- Trust hasn't been established, or
- There isn't an appreciation of the different cultures and practices around the table.

One of the greatest benefits from partnership is the establishing of networks, of creating relationships amongst like organizations, accessing new colleagues, skills, information and support.

If you're considering a partnership or have been approached to partner, arm yourself with the right information to make good decisions for your organization. Identify why you'd partner, who makes sense to partner with, what do you need to discuss and build together, how will you maintain the partnership, when will you evaluate, how to conclude a partnership, and more. Remember that partners each have their own priorities, come from different place, skill sets, cultures, sectors – all things that can impact how partnerships will function.

December 2009 Partnership Forum delegates prioritized the following attributes for ideal partnership:

- Honesty
- Good communication
- Sharing openly the needs or expectations
- Respect differing points of view
- Be open to new ideas, flexible
- Stay focused on the purpose and goal of the partnership

Use 'Growing Partnerships in Yukon' as a tool to prepare, inspire and motivate your organization and partners. May it guide why and how you partner, where you might find partners and improve your chances of success in partnership.

## DEFINING PARTNERSHIP

***A 'partnership' is a relationship where two or more parties, having compatible goals, form an agreement to share the work, share the risk and share the results or proceeds.<sup>1</sup>***

Simply put, a partnership is an agreement to do something together that will benefit all involved. Partnership implies the sharing of decision-making, risks, power, benefits and burdens. It should add value to each partner's respective services, products or situations. In partnerships, there is give and take.

When you partner, you bring your skills, experience, resources and goals together with another partner. This collaboration requires special attitudes, values, skills and knowledge.

Partnerships can vary in the length of time they are in operation from short term to long term, and they can be either simple or complex in their design. They could be formed for any number of reasons and purposes; however, partnerships share certain similarities in that they:

- share authority
- have joint investment of resources
- result in mutual benefits and
- share risk, responsibility and accountability

Yukon organizations partner for a number of reasons including:

- To access funding
- To connect rural initiatives to communities closer to resources and agencies
- To leverage one another's contacts and expertise
- To share basic office expenses, space or equipment
- To ensure the goals are met and to the greatest audience possible, and so on.

Types of partnerships can include:

- Non-profit to non-profit
- Non-profit to Government
- Non-profit to industry
- Government to Government



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<sup>1</sup> From The Partnership Handbook ( HRSDC)

## WHY PARTNER?

There are often specific reasons why certain partnerships are formed:

- They might be the right choice for taking action, solving problems or sharing limited resources.
- They could be by request, often from a funding body, to include a wide range of stakeholders.
- When resources and efforts by similar mandated organizations can be leveraged to do more or better by collaborating or partnering – thus saving money, avoid duplication and sharing resources for all stakeholders i.e.: shared services arrangements between two or more organizations.

The single biggest factor to a successful partnership experience is ATTITUDE. Bring the right attitude to the table and you can find solutions, work through challenges and share success.

Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services partners with the Family Literacy Centre to bring the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program to Yukon parents and their children birth to 13 months of age.

## THE FOUR STEPS IN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

There are four steps to go through in a complete partnership experience. They follow the same approach in strategic planning, or starting a business or running an event.

Once you have defined your goal, you need to:

1. **Research** - identify who likely partner(s) could be, what is their mission, values and strengths, what resources do they have to share, would you be in competition, what other options there are, what is their history in partnership, etc.
2. **Plan** – together with the partner, discuss all elements of the project or initiative (see page 9 for elements), understanding well in advance expectations, styles, approaches, methods of communication, decision-making processes, timelines, what success looks like and more.
3. **Implement** – begin the partnership, launch the event, start the work – whatever the partnership is about, keep communications open, revisit the goals and objectives often and be flexible to things unforeseen.
4. **Evaluate** – either during the project or at the conclusion, evaluate both the partners and the project - did we achieve our goals, what were the outcomes, where were the strengths and weaknesses. All this information will valuable information and set the stage for future partnerships, as well as reports to funders and other stakeholders.

Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services partners with the Whole Child Program to bring the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program to Yukon parents and their toddlers.

## DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Successful partnerships happen all the time. They don't have to be complicated, nor do they have to follow a set formula or pattern of development. Each one is unique and will evolve at its own pace. There are, however, concrete steps that will lead to greater success and effectiveness.

1. knowing what you want to do - GOAL
2. deciding who will do what – ROLE CLARITY
3. making a plan to do it – PLANNING IT
4. Evaluating it as you go along – MEASURE PERFORMANCE!

**Key elements** to a successful partnership include:

1. **VISION** — a common picture for the future.
2. **GOALS** — the desired outcomes – ensuring that all partners are on the same page.
3. **MEMBERSHIP** — those who are involved – in the partnership and who is being served.
4. **COMMITMENT** — agreement to work together.
5. **ACTION PLAN** — the steps required to reach goals.
6. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** — who will do what and do the players have the right skills to meet these roles.
7. **COMMUNICATION** — how information will be shared and what are solutions to work through challenges.
8. **RESOURCES** — what is needed and what is available in time, money, people, etc.
9. **EVALUATION** — knowing when you are successful.
10. **REVISION AND CLOSURE/or CONTINUATION** — how to adjust and move on.

Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services partners with the Child Development Centre to bring the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program to Yukon parents and their toddlers.

## PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES

One of the key challenges in partnership, either between not-for-profit organizations, communities and/or governments, is building trust. Investing early in building relationships that include honest, respectful and open dialogue will be critical when things get stressful or busy.

A second challenge in building solid partnerships happens when there is staff turn-over. How does the outgoing person transfer the information, knowledge and networks to the new or returning employees so that the transition is seamless and the project continues forward? One solution is to follow a Project Management<sup>2</sup> model specific to the project. This model will detail in writing all aspects of the Project and partnership including scope, goals, timelines, risks, plans, budgets, and so on.

Another reason that partnerships can stumble is when the front line partner staff or representatives are not able to make decisions. The solution is for organizations to set direction at the top and empower their team to find solutions and make decisions within reasonable parameters.

Challenges can also arise when partners don't have good problem-solving skills. For example, if your expectations are different and styles for communicating don't match, problem-solving skills will be essential.

There are four basic steps to resolving issues or problem-solving:

1. Define the problem.
2. Understand the problem and who is involved.
3. Identify possible options.
4. Pick one and act on it.

In part of the 'preparing to partner' work, all partners have to discuss and agree on how to work through these challenges – before they happen – once again increasing your odds of a successful venture.

### When the Issue is ignored....

- Problems will persist or get worse.
- Individuals will push their will or make their own decisions.
- Individuals may seek legal remedies.
- There will be increased cynicism and divisiveness.
- Ultimately, the partnership and aspired goals will suffer.

Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services partners with the Whitehorse Health Centre to bring the 'Mothering Your Baby.....the first year' program to mothers with babies under 1 year of age.

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<sup>2</sup> Project Management is a tool used by professional project managers following a standardized and internationally recognized template from concept to evaluation.

## CLOSURE—Ending a Partnership

Normally ending a partnership happens when goals have been reached, the project has been completed, or the purpose of the partnership has been satisfied.

Both projects and partnerships have endings, which are most often positive and satisfying. Some partnerships go on for a very long time, even after short-term projects have been accomplished. They have positive experiences and seek ways to continue working together, saving money and exceeding targets. Through conclusion of the project and partnership, partners evaluate how they did as they transition to the next partner opportunity.

The following are some suggestions about formalizing and recognizing closure and endings to partnerships. Ask the members of the partnership to consider the following:

- What have been the major successes of the partnership?
- What can be done to acknowledge all the hard work?
- Recall what each person or organization contributed.
- Who needs to be recognized within the group and outside?
- Are there assets to be managed, shared or donated?
- What needs to be conveyed outside the partnership regarding the ending or closure of the partnership?
- How will you capture the history of the partnership?
- Solicit ideas about a celebration or recognition party or ceremony.
- Pick a time, place and event to which all can agree.
- Who should be included? Should there be two events?
- Celebrate and prepare to move on!

### Yukon Partnership Forum Delegates on working through conflict...

- Voice the problem
- Think win/win
- Stay focused on the problem
- Get to the heart of the matter
- Ask questions with the view to understand your partners issues and concerns
- Be open to change
- Be creative

Learning Disabilities Association Yukon (LDAY) and Health and Social Services – provided services to individuals and families with learning disabilities including information library, informal counselling, workshops

## **ARE YOU PARTNER-READY?**

Several things need to be considered and in place before you begin a partnership.

A partnership should start by inviting organizations to share their skills, time and resources for a clear or definite purpose — one that has the support or approval of those it will benefit

There will be a need for some preliminary discussions about relevant issues prior to a decision that a partnership is desirable. Obviously, before entering into the partnership, some thought should take place about preparedness of:

1. the various organizations that might be involved,
2. the individuals who would be members, and
3. the partnership group as a whole.

Experience tells us that time spent in the beginning, establishing a firm foundation, will be saved in the long run by greatly increasing the probability of success.

### **The Organizational Assessment**

Many organizations are beginning to think that partnerships may be the route to success and, given some of the changes taking place, they may even be seen as a necessity. Before entering into a partnership, however, it is important to ensure that the organization you represent is ready, willing and able to be a partner

One key issue faced by organizations is who to choose to represent them in the partnership. Selecting an organization that is available, that has the skills and who will do a good job for both the partnership and the organization is most desirable.

As partnerships are sometimes considered secondary to the main work of the organization, it is useful to have ongoing communication about how both the representative and the partnership activities are doing.

Below are some questions you can ask of yourself or your prospective partner when considering a partnership:

1. Does their mandate fit with our proposed project?
2. Do we have compatible values?
3. What resources will we each have available (e.g. time, money, materials, space, and equipment)?
4. How will the partnership benefit the organization? or
5. How much time will it take and how will that time connect to the other activities of the organization?

## CONCLUSION

‘Growing Partnerships in Yukon’ is a tool and a conversation-starter in support of partnership. It provides some tips, considerations and recommendations to have success in partnership.

There will be times when even the best laid plans fail. This document reinforces the benefits of preparation, planning and the need for open communication about how to celebrate successes or work through difficult issues. The *process* of setting up, maintaining, and closing a partnership is at least as important as the purpose of the partnership.

While any partnership or venture will benefit from an investment of planning in the beginnings, the degree of structure or formality to partnerships is totally dependent on the partners, needs, expectations, size and scope of said project or venture. Through early conversations, partners can agree on what their needs are – collectively.

In a region where it is common to work in partnership with people from cultures different from yours, it is critical to approach the partnership with great readiness to try to understand, to ask questions if uncertain, to be open to acknowledging undercurrents, and to work sensitively toward resolution of challenges.

The greatest conclusion you should draw from this partnership-building guide is that if there is a good idea, with passionate and committed people, and the will for success – all partnerships can be successful! Just plan, communicate, and be open, honest, respectful and ready to learn.



Learning Disabilities Association Yukon (LDAY) and Advanced Education provides wage subsidies for camp staff under the summer employment programs.

## **APPENDICES**

### **SUMMARY OF DECEMBER 2009 & APRIL 2010 PARTNERSHIP FORUMS**

Two partnership forums laid the foundation for this partnership-building guide. Both forums included representatives from numerous non-government organizations, First Nations organizations, business interests, and municipal, territorial and federal levels of government.

#### **Partnership Forum #1 December 2009**

We began the first forum with an opening circle to introduce participants to each other and to foster a feeling of community and trust. Our first agenda item was sharing the story of the partnership between the Rendezvous Rotary Club of Whitehorse and the Yukon Literacy Coalition to bring the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to Yukon children.

While this partnership was very successful – all infants in the Yukon have been eligible to enter this program since January 2009 – the partners shared some of the challenges they experienced during this evolving and continuing partnership.

We asked participants to bring their own partnership stories to share; however, few stories were forthcoming. Our assessment was that a climate of trust would take time to be established among such a diverse group and a climate of trust was needed to share partnership stories that would reveal something about the partners. Further, history was present as numerous participants had been, or are in partnership or working arrangements with each other.

At the first forum, participants were asked to break into four discussion groups, based on partnership stages, and record their discussions on flip chart pages. We then reconvened to share discussion results, ending with a closing circle. These flip chart pages and discussions were extended, supported, and strengthened through seven individual meetings with participants who responded to an invitation to continue the conversation.

#### **Partnership Forum #2 April 2010**

At the second forum, participants had an opportunity to review the draft partnership-building guide and offer suggestions for changes or additions. One participant noted that the forums are a ‘think tank on partnerships’, reinforcing the idea that our understanding about partnerships and our partnership practice will continue to grow and change.

Some key ideas emerged: there is confirmed value in coming together to understand the current projects, goals, and aspirations of current organizations in the Yukon. We can discover new partnerships, support others doing similar work, and perhaps address challenges together. Organizations can face challenges with more than one partnership project and with the presence of multiple stakeholders. It is important that rural Yukon is enticed to participate in forums and it is also important to widen distribution through Volunteer Yukon channels.

## **Future Partnership Forums**

Participants in future Partnership Forums will determine the path the forums take. However, there were some interesting suggestions already provided that we have simply not been able to integrate properly into this guide. We recommend that future forums investigate the following topics from Partnership Forum #1:

- Pinch Theory
- Carver Governance Model
- Sample of a Memorandum of Agreement
- Conflict Resolution Process and
- Sample Partnership Agreement

Possible topics for future forums from Partnership Forum #2:

- a 'partnership template' could be developed to guide a project if key people leave
- proposal writing and sharing best practices
- how to find partners when time is short and opportunities are big and
- developing a template or holding a workshop on Project Management of Partnerships

The Yukon Literacy Coalition is committed to holding two Partnership Forums per year (2011 & 2012). We hope to expand the partnership conversation through inclusion of additional stakeholders.

Research, partnership forums, and individual meetings formed the foundation of this Yukon partnership-building guide.

Learning Disabilities Association Yukon (LDAY) and Public Schools – provide support services to families and children including tutor program, information, informal counselling, and transition support.

## SUMMARY OF ORGANIZATIONS IN YUKON BY COMMUNITY (with sample types)

There are approximately 600 non profit organizations in the Yukon.

Community	Number of Organizations	Types include:
Beaver Creek	4	Community, Library, Family, Safety
Burwash Landing	4	Cultural, Historical and Recreation
Carcross	15	Business, Family, Faith, History, Recreation, Safety, Social Justice
Carmacks	9	Heritage, Library, Employment, Faith, Recreation, Safety
Dawson City	60+	Business, Recreation, Heritage, Arts, Library, Family, Community, Safety
Destruction Bay	1	Recreation
Faro	8	Business, Arts, Recreation, Family, Safety
Haines Junction	21	Youth, Arts, Business, Recreation, Employment, Safety, Social/Health, Community
Keno	2	Community, Heritage
Marsh Lake	2	Community, Waste Management
Mayo	8	Business, Youth, Heritage, Community, Recreation
Old Crow	6	Recreation, Waste Management, Arts
Pelly Crossing	2	Recreation, Arts
Ross River	7	Faith, Community, Family, Heritage, Recreation
Tagish	2	Safety, Community
Teslin	11	Housing, Community, Business, Heritage, Youth, Recreation
Watson Lake	38	Business, Recreation, Community, Arts, Family, Safety, Employment, Heritage, Environment
Whitehorse	150+	Community, Business, Law, Family, Youth, Justice, Social, Recreation, Arts, Labour, Education, Health, Safety, Faith

## A Final Check List For Partnerships

The check list below was modeled after the check list from 'The Partnership Handbook', HRSDC and can serve as a check list or as a summary tool. It revisits the most significant components of preparing and working through the partnership process. If you have answered yes to each question, you have a solid foundation for your partnership and are well on your way to success.

### Answer Yes or No or In Progress

As a partnership group, we have:

1. Created a vision \_\_\_\_\_
2. Defined project and partner goals \_\_\_\_\_
3. Identified benefactors or audiences \_\_\_\_\_
4. Have agreement and commitment \_\_\_\_\_
5. Developed an action plan \_\_\_\_\_
6. Established roles and responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_
7. Created some guiding principles or values re: working together \_\_\_\_\_
8. Designed a communication strategy \_\_\_\_\_
9. Established meeting schedule and reporting plan \_\_\_\_\_
10. Developed resource outline:  
    What does each partner bring and what is missing \_\_\_\_\_  
    People (skills and gaps) \_\_\_\_\_  
    Financial (Money to Operate) \_\_\_\_\_  
    Physical (Space & Supplies) \_\_\_\_\_
11. Have financial accounting procedures/plans \_\_\_\_\_
12. Established evaluation process and performance measurements \_\_\_\_\_
13. Discussed closure or continuance of the partnership \_\_\_\_\_