

IFEX Collaboration Tools: Checklist for Partners

This checklist facilitates self-reflection and action planning for new or existing collaboration opportunities. It provides a series of prompts to reflect on how the IFEX Collaboration Principles are (or are not) integrated into a particular collaboration initiative, from the perspective of an organisation invited to join a collaboration effort. Reviewing this checklist will help you to think through and clearly articulate questions about how the conditions for collaboration are being cultivated.

Centering around purpose

- Is there a clear articulation of the goals and the values that underpin the partnership?
- Does this collaboration opportunity respond to the needs, concerns and knowledge of those who best know the specific context or lived experience?
- Is there a shared vision regarding the long-term transformation or are exchanges focused on short term inputs and outputs, and specific project targets?

Stage of involvement and agency partners

- Have you been able to share your understanding of the issue, to set realistic expectations about how your organisation can contribute and what risks you foresee?
- Do you get to provide input to the scope of work and terms of relationship, before the collaboration opportunity is formally captured into a contract?
- Are you granted the opportunity to provide input on the evaluation and performance indicators?
- Do on the ground actors have agency to make day-to-day decisions concerning the implementation based on their expertise?

Governance

- Is there clarity around the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved? Are responsibilities based on each collaborator's expertise, resources, and bandwidth?
- Have your particular needs (e.g. time difference, internet access) and preferred communication style been considered when defining the ways of working together?
- Is this collaboration framed as a two-way knowledge transfer (ideas, skills and resources)? Do you have opportunities to challenge and/or refuse ideas or activities included in the plan?
- Is there a mechanism to review ideas and activities during the collaboration

Power and worldviews

- Is there an acknowledgement of the power asymmetries among partners, and dedicated spaces to question and unpack power and privilege?
- Have you included dedicated spaces to deconstruct individual biases and preconceived notions about other stakeholders involved in this partnership? (e.g., stereotypes on minority groups or preconceived notions about Western organisation practices and funds)
- Is there a shared understanding of the power dynamics likely to affect the collaboration?

Safety and wellbeing

- Are the risks and safety of advocates and CSO staff working on the ground, especially those who work in more hostile environments, being considered?
- Is there a plan for advocates and CSO staff in case their safety and security are at risk?
- Are concerns around sharing sensitive data about advocates and communities being addressed?

Transparency and flexibility

- How much information are you provided about the overall funding arrangement?
- Are the administrative requirements proportional to your specific context and organisation?
- Are you being open about the full amount of funding needed for your organisation to meaningfully participate in this collaboration opportunity?
- Does the budget allow for adaptability, so that activities can respond to learnings from the ground and readjust to contextual changes?

Honouring collaboration

- Are the costs of strengthening the partnership and cultivating relationships (e.g. in-person convenings or governance meetings) built into the overall program budget?
- Is there cohesion between the individuals and involved, and do they seem prepared to achieve the shared purpose or goal of the collaborative process?

Accountability and recognition

- Are accountability processes centred around the communities being served, or do they respond only to donor-centric metrics?
- Is there clarity around recognising the contributions of all actors in the authorship of co-created materials and intellectual property resulting from this collaboration?

- Is there an open culture for regular feedback, open to unexpected outputs and failure, rather than communications being focused on periodic formal reporting dates?
- Are there clear communication channels to ensure feedback?