

## Learnings about determining a partner.

1. The premise of all partnerships is relationship. Only partner with people you have taken time to build and establish relationship before you “do” anything. Avoid starting with projects.
2. Your success in partnership is largely predicated on your partner. Therefore look for a partner who does not really need you, or one who has a vision and a strategy to achieve their goal even without you. When you engage such a partner you only help them get to their goal faster and further rather than envisioning them.
3. Best partnership are formed with indigenous visionary leaders. There are “men of peace” in every region and the locals can tell you who the honest and true leaders in their community are. Unfortunately these are a handful as most partners have learned what the westerners need and hence create an attractional model geared to drawing western funds. Look for audacious bold vision that would radically change a community, country and continent.
4. Avoid being the hero in the partners’ community, always defer the attention to the local church or local partner. Let the people being served see and know more about the local partner rather than the visiting church.
5. While relationship are everlasting make sure all projects have an exit plan, any project that requires a continuous in flow of outside funding will most likely create dependency. Therefore begin projects with the end in mind.
6. Hit the ground listening. Be slow to speak and be quick to listen. Debrief your learnings with a diverse team not just people who think like you. Lead with questions immediately you start giving answers you disempower the local as the westerner is perceived to be always correct.
7. Have a team that is helps discern and determine a partner do not do it alone. For buy in reasons and safety in counsel.
8. Dream with your partner on what you can do together that you cannot possibly do apart.
9. Envision and establish what reciprocity and mutuality would look like. Find ways in which your partner helps advance the kingdom in your congregation.
10. Have MOU’s for projects and maybe consider covenants for your partnerships.
11. Most formidable partnerships develop best when there is a shared vision, like discipleship, transformation of their context etc.
12. Always determine how sustainability will emerge in two ways; Finances and human resource. Anything that continues to depend on outsiders for manpower and funding will most likely not last beyond the initiators of the project. Imagine legacy.
13. Determine what accountability looks like. If the partner is not already accountable, seldom will you change them. Avoid lone rangers who have no accountability structures whether for their character or finances.
14. The relationships in the partners are best engaged at multiple levels. Avoid one person from your church or organization being the only relationship holder. Try exercise deep relational connections including various departments. Some of the deepest are when the children of the partners become friends.

15. Be willing to live in each other's contexts for a long period of time. Explore exchange of staff, volunteers etc.
16. Never treat the "poor poorly".
17. Find local expressions of global vision. This may be as simple as finding people who live near you who hail from partner countries, engage them and rope them in.
18. Spend time with the partners where you are not doing a project but just relaxing, having fun, meeting each other's family etc.