BRIDGING THE GAPS

Health and rights for key populations

EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION IN PARTNERSHIPS FOR HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

TOOLKIT

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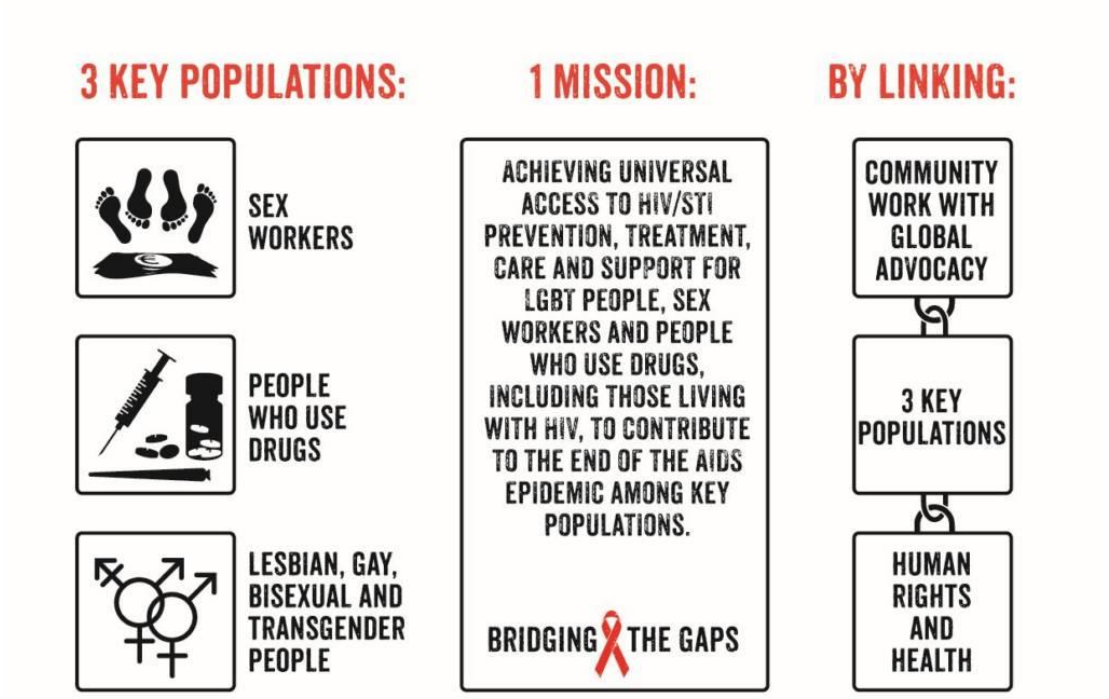
BRIDGING THE GAPS

Health and rights for key populations

The Bridging the Gaps programme addresses the human rights violations and challenges faces by sex workers, people who use drugs, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, in accessing HIV and other essential health services. The Bridging the Gaps programme works with more than 90 local partner organisations which collaborate with four Dutch non-governmental organisations: Aidsfonds, AIDS Foundation East-West International (AFEW International), COC Netherlands, and Mainline, and with five global networks: the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+), the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD), the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC), MPact Global Action (formerly known as MSMGF), and the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP).



aidsfonds AFEW International GNP+ Global Network of People Living with HIV

INPUD International Network of People who Use Drugs ITPC International Treatment Preparedness Coalition MAINline M•PACT Formerly known as MSMGF nswp

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SUMMARY

THIS TOOLKIT...

... is a collection of exercises to establish, foster and improve collaborations in partnerships for health and human rights. The exercises are all based on existing tools, and are tested and adapted based on experiences within Bridging the Gaps.

WHY WAS IT DEVELOPED AND BY WHOM?

This toolkit aims to translate research into action: it is a follow-up of a study conducted by the University of Amsterdam and funded by Share-Net International about lessons learnt on collaborations in Bridging the Gaps (2015). The toolkit was developed by the University of Amsterdam together with Aidsfonds, Alliance partners, and tested and adapted during a pilot in Kenya in November 2017 and in Kyrgyzstan in March 2018. This Toolkit was developed with financial support of Share-Net International. It uses examples of the Oxfam GB Facilitation Handbook, the World Wildlife Fund Partnership Toolbox, and the ELHRA checklist for collaboration.

WHAT DOES IT CONTAIN?

a) an explanation of collaboration in partnerships and collaborative capacity.

b) a set of tools to help team managers and team members to establish or strengthen a collaboration in partnerships.

WHO IS IT FOR?

This toolkit can be used by anyone who wants to establish or strengthen collaboration in a partnership with other organisations.

WHEN TO USE IT?

The tools can be used when organizations first get together or in later stages of collaboration in their partnerships. See also ‘How to use this Toolkit’ on page 8.

1 INTRODUCTION

What is collaboration? Why it is important in partnerships between different types of organisations? What builds or strengthens collaboration in a partnership?

Collaboration is a process in which various partner organizations work together in order to share knowledge or to create or achieve something. Collaboration is important for better programme outcomes and problem solving (often in complex contexts). Collaboration is strengthened when there is a high level of trust between partner organizations and when the rules and structures for their relationships and ways to act are created together.

This toolkit includes a set of tools for various phases of collaborations in simple language. It can be used by team leaders and team members across partner organizations to further strengthen collaboration in partnerships. Depending on the partnership's needs, one or more of the seven tools can be used by a facilitator with partner organizations, to build or strengthen collaboration and to effectively deliver shared objectives.

The tools are concise and practical, and structured as follows:

(1) a description of the learning objectives and agenda
(2) facilitation advice
(3) an explanation of the steps to take

Make sure your workshop has output by summarizing your action points for each tool (page 9).

2 HOW TO BUILD COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

In the past four and a half years of the Bridging the Gaps programme, around 100 partners collaborated through the alliance across 22 countries, including 36 organisations representing LGBT people, 44 representing PWUD, 25 representing sex workers, and eight partners whose main focus is on people living with HIV, including the lead agency. Within this set-up, partners were required to collaboratively work towards the programme goals. But while collaboration can be very productive, it is also challenging. How do you collaborate effectively with such a complex alliance structure (de Vries, Brenman et al. 2015)?

Collaboration is a process in which various partners work together. Practically, collaboration can be: (1) having contact between partner organisations, (2) sharing knowledge by giving advice, training, meetings, or (3) creating something together, for example a written strategy, research or guideline, event, or policy (Hardy, Phillips et al. 2003).

Normally, collaboration begins with informal dialogue, visiting each other, and over a period of time structures become formalised, committing partners to shared goals (Gulzar and Henry 2005).

The conditions needed for good collaboration are called collaborative capacity (Kendall, Theron et al. 2013). One important condition is the mind-set of the partners. In other words, awareness of differences between partners, yet the willingness to actively work together. A second condition is having communication skills, such as non-defensive listing, active listening, self-disclosure, or the sharing of needs, feelings, and specific requests (Bantham, Celuch et al. 2003).

3 THE SEVEN CRITERIA FOR COLLABORATION

The seven criteria for the building or strengthening of collaboration are outlined below. Criteria are based on the research on Bridging the Gaps collaborations conducted by the University of Amsterdam.

VALUES, TRUST, AND RECIPROCITY

Collaborating partner organizations need to have a set of joint values and require mutual trust in order to be able to collaborate on joint objectives. Partners generally have an 'I-will-if-you-will' mentality. So the more partner organizations believe others will do something in return, the more they are willing to collaborate (Thomson, Perry et al. 2007).

MIND-SET

Collaborating partner organizations need to be awareness of differences between partners, yet the willingness to actively work together (Kendall, Theron et al. 2013).

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Collaborating partner organizations must be skilled in: non-defensive listing, active listening, self-disclosure, or the sharing of needs, feelings, and specific requests (Kendall, Theron et al. 2013).

SHARED AND DIFFERING INTERESTS

Collaborating partner organizations must experience a degree of depending on each other with benefits. This can be based on shared interests (for example, the protection of human rights of key populations) or on differing interests when partner organizations are able to complement each other (Thomson, Perry et al. 2007).

MEDIATING CONFLICTING INTERESTS

Collaborating partner organizations need to balance and mediate tensions between organizational self-interests and missions versus collective interests and collaboration goals (Thomson, Perry et al. 2007).

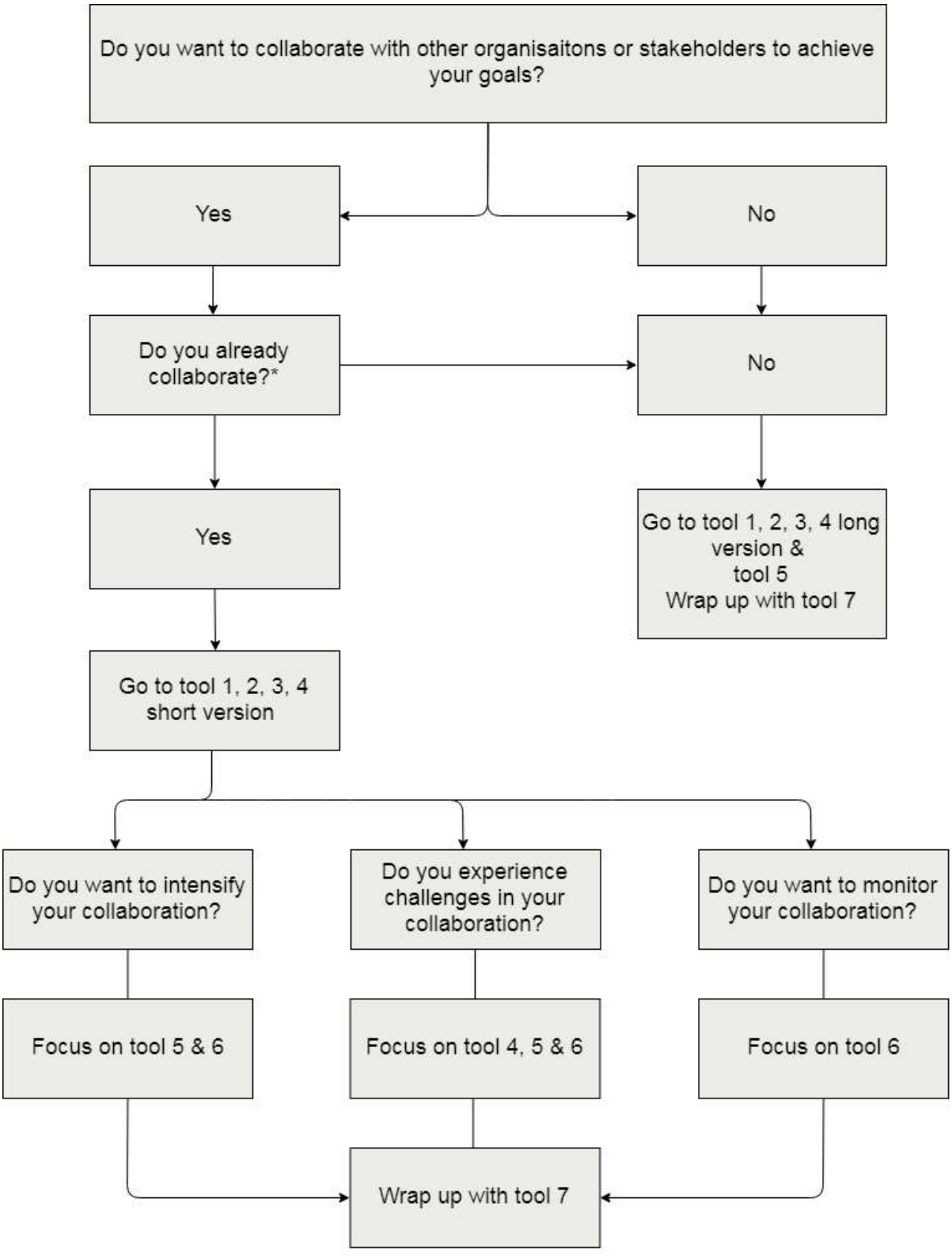
GOVERNANCE

Collaborating partner organizations need to jointly make decisions about rules that will influence actions and relationships. Also choices should be made regarding problem solving and decision-making (Thomson, Perry et al. 2007).

ADMINISTRATION

Some kind of administration must be in place that moves plans and ideas to action (Thomson, Perry et al. 2007). Administration consists of secretarial duties to manage people, resources, activities, and the operation of an organization as a whole.

4 HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT



**Collaboration consists of a group op people and organizatins that have continually worked togehter to achieve goals, and have begun to take action to implement its plans (National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools 2008)*

5 TOOLKIT OUTPUT: ACTION PLAN

Print this Toolkit Output. After every tool, document your action points here.

TOOL NR.	ACTION POINTS

6 TOOL 1: DEFINING JOINT PRIORITIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This tool is a great way to begin a partnership session, as it defines or reminds all partner organizations why they want or need to collaborate (ELHRA 2018). What do you hope to achieve with your partner(s)? What are your joint priorities? What do you bring to the collaboration? Are there other organisations or other people in the organization who need to be on board? What are their priorities?

TIME REQUIRED	20 minutes (short version) 1 hour (long version)
LEVEL OF COLLABORATION	During collaboration (short version) Before collaboration (long version)
RESOURCES REQUIRED	Post-its in different colours Flip chart papers (one per two people) and marker pens Tape to hang flip-charts on the walls

FACILITATION ADVICE

- Make sure you use a large wall and make clear to participants what side is low and what side is high priority to avoid confusion.
- Make clear that any priority can be mentioned during this tool, ranging for example from informal to formal contact, small events to larger (joint) projects, and nearby goals to long-term visions or aspirations.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Introduce the tool objectives and the importance of trust and open communication.
2. Ask each person to write on post-its the priorities of their organizations for this partnership and to place them on a wall. On the left high priority, on the right low priority.
3. Ask the group to walk around and reflect on any noticeable similarities and differences. This way partners can identify common goals between the organizations. Note down the most important joint goals.
4. If the group consists of more than 10 people, work in smaller groups with overlapping aims, discuss what each can bring to the collaboration and write this on a flip chart. Make a plan of action for the coming year, defining who does what to achieve each of the identified joint goals.
5. Ask each group to present to the rest of the group.
6. Discuss plenary, agree on the main action points and write these down in the Toolkit Output (page 9).

7 TOOL 2: DIVERSITY, FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This tool can be used to demonstrate how partner organizations from a variety of backgrounds can produce a variety of ideas, information and solutions for change and also how they have different and sometimes conflicting ways of thinking or working about those issues (De Vries & Brennan 2015, Oxfam 2007, Eiling 2017, WWF 2018).

TIME REQUIRED	20 minutes (short version) 30 minutes (long version)
LEVEL OF COLLABORATION	During collaboration (short version) Before collaboration (long version)
RESOURCES REQUIRED	The self-assessment tool spider diagram (Annex I) printed on A4, one for each participant Pens to draw on the spider diagram Posters (A4) with corner labels and tape to hang on the walls (see step 4)

FACILITATION ADVICE

- For a shorter version, ask partners to fill out the self-assessment tool in advance.
- Make sure the corners of the room are named with a label before starting step 4.
- During plenary discussion: make use of the composition that has been created by the spider diagram. Make sure people on different parts of the room have a say.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Introduce the tool objectives and the importance of trust and open communication.
2. Ask each person to fill in the answer to the questions in the spider diagram of the self-assessment tool based on the perspective they have of the organization they represent (5-10 min). The diagram gives a visual representation of the diversity within the partnership and allows for easy comparisons.
3. Each corner in the room should be labelled with a poster according to the spider diagram: corner 1= public sector, corner opposite 1= civil society, corner 2= health, corner opposite 2= social justice, provider led versus key population led, prevention/treatment versus legislative, implementers versus activists.
4. Ask the group to get up, stretch, take their spider diagram and then regroup themselves in the room based on the spider diagram.
5. Discuss plenary how these differences or similarities surface during collaboration as facilitators and/or as barriers. Write main action points on the Toolkit Output (page 9).

8 TOOL 3: SHARED VALUES AND INTERESTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This tool can be used to understand what matters to each other. The partner organizations may be different, but they additionally share numerous values, interest, and motivations (Oxfam 2007).

TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes (short version) 45 minutes (long version)
LEVEL OF COLLABORATION	During collaboration (short version) Before collaboration (long version)
RESOURCES REQUIRED	Three flip chart papers with following headings: (1) Important Events in My Life (2) My Working Life (3) The Wider World. Marker pens and tape to hang flip-charts on the walls

FACILITATION ADVICE

- Make sure no one feels forced to reveal anything that they do not want to share.
- Encourage people to be as open as they feel they can be.
- Make sure that everyone includes his or her thoughts about the next ten years. This can reveal a lot about their values, as well as their hopes and motivation.
- If people feel shy about drawing, explain they do not have to be experts; they can also draw in a more abstract way.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Introduce the tool objectives and the importance of trust and open communication.
2. Place three sheets with time lines on separate walls of the room. Start date: the birth date of the oldest participant and the finish date should be ten years into the future.
3. Explain to the participants that they need to think of one (or two) important events in their lives (past or future) for each of the following areas: their personal life, their working life, and in the wider world. Ask them to draw a picture/sketch on the relevant timeline.
4. Ask everyone to walk around to have a quick look at what others have drawn.
5. Discuss plenary per timeline: what has been drawn? What strikes them the most? Reflect on similarities, differences, and shared values. Write main action points on the Toolkit Output (page 9).

9 TOOL 4: COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This tool is particularly useful with partner organizations that have already established a working relationship and have experiences with communicating together. If no collaboration has taken place, communication in other settings can be discussed. The aim is to build team awareness around the importance of communication by sharing experiences, storytelling, and creating opportunities for the partnership. This tool makes people aware of and encourages a discussion about different communication styles that may exist within the team, and how to reconcile them (Oxfam 2007).

TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes
LEVEL OF COLLABORATION	Any
RESOURCES REQUIRED	Laptop, PowerPoint, projector, screen Flip chart papers (one per two people) and marker pens Tape to hang flip-charts on the walls

FACILITATION ADVICE

- Make sure your PowerPoint is made in advance.
- Focus on positive experiences of things that work in a collaboration.
- Emphasise the importance of non-defensive communication skills.
- Do not ignore sensitive discussions, but address these with the role-play and discuss intensively. Ask out-going participants to do the role-play.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Introduce the tool objectives and the importance of trust and open communication.
2. Show a PowerPoint with the following question:
   a. *Describe a time when you were part of a team that had a high level of trust and respect among its members and from those outside the team. How were trust and respect built and communicated? What made it possible to establish trust in this group?*
   b. *Describe a time when you had an experience of being unhappy with what a partner was doing. How did you communicate this? Did this change the situation?*
3. In pairs (mix organizations), let them share the experiences of high level of trust they have had in previous teams and take notes of the main elements on a flipchart.
4. Walk around and choose two examples of complicated communication. And ask for each example two partners to do a role-play. Tell the one partner what kind of information they need to get and the other partner in what way to respond (e.g. defensive, shy, stubborn, rude). Discuss plenary how to best deal with the situation.
5. Discuss in plenary and write the key themes to communicate better and build trust on the Toolkit Output (page 9).

10 TOOL 5: PARTNERSHIP BASELINE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This tool can be used to identify what collaborations are already in place, and to identify the benefits and challenges experienced by partner organizations (WWF 2018).

TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes
LEVEL OF COLLABORATION	Existing collaboration(s)
RESOURCES REQUIRED	Flip chart papers per group and marker pens Partnership Baseline (Annex II)

FACILITATION ADVICE

- Make sure groups are diverse and not too big, and organisations that currently collaborate are grouped together.
- Walk around and address questions regarding the Baseline (Annex II).

HOW IT WORKS

1. Introduce the tool objectives and the importance of trust and open communication.
2. First ask participants to group together according to with whom they currently collaborate.
3. Then ask with which organization the partner organizations would like to collaborate more. The change of participants' position in the room gives a very visual representation of the will to work together.
4. Sit together in small groups (3-5 people) with those partners with whom they are collaborating.
5. Use some or all of the characteristics described in the Partnership Baseline or add new ones if needed, see Annex II.
6. Agree on a baseline understanding of the partnership, and discuss if any actions are needed to better make use of current strengths and best practices or to address current characteristics, or challenges.
7. Per group, summarize the findings on a spreadsheet and present to the rest of the group.
8. Discuss in plenary and write main action points on the Toolkit Output (page 9).

11 TOOL 6: MONITOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This tool can be used to assess your collaborations, in order to identify the strong aspects (such as best practices, to scale up and share with others) and weaker aspects that may need attention in the near future to increase the impact of the partnership (ELHRA 2018, WWF 2018).

TIME REQUIRED	30 minutes (short version) 40 minutes (long version)
LEVEL OF COLLABORATION	Existing collaboration(s)
RESOURCES REQUIRED	Self-assessment tool (Annex III), one for each participant or per group as identified during the partnership baseline Two flip charts per group

FACILITATION ADVICE

- Explain that this self-assessment tool is not used to judge existing collaborations, but rather to learn about what goes well and what can be further strengthened, for increased joint impact.
- For a shorter version of this tool, you can ask partners to fill out the self-assessment tool in advance and present an analysis of the findings to the group.
- During step 7 walk around and ask the partners questions about how feasible their actions and task divisions are.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Introduce the tool objectives and the importance of trust and open communication.
2. Ask each partner organization to fill in the self-assessment tool regarding the partnership based on their own perspective (Annex III). This can be done individually or in small groups.
3. Divide the group into small groups (3-4 people), with people involved in the same partnership, and ask them to compare differences in perception concerning the partnership.
4. Each group selects 2-3 aspects that scored low and have a high priority to be addressed in your joint action plan (weaknesses).
5. Also select 2-3 aspects that scored high according to all group members (strengths).
6. Ask to use the selected strengths and weaknesses in a SWOT analysis (Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats).
7. Ask the group to discuss how the threats and weaknesses can be addressed and how to fully utilise the strengths and upcoming opportunities. Ask them to write the actions down on the Toolkit Output (page 9). Make sure they formulate very concrete, feasible actions, and define roles and responsibilities, as well as the timeline.

12 TOOL 7: ACTION PLAN

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This tool can be used to wrap up your workshop about collaboration in partnerships. It is important to think about how you work with other partner organizations in the future. Partnerships constituting of people from different (organizational) cultures often have different and sometimes opposing expectations about how things should be handled in a team situation. This exercise is an opportunity to summarize lessons learned and agree in advance on jointly formulated rules and how you are going to work together (Oxfam 2007, ELHRA 2018, WWF 2018).

TIME REQUIRED	40 minutes
LEVEL OF COLLABORATION	Any
RESOURCES REQUIRED	Toolkit Output Flip chart

FACILITATION ADVICE

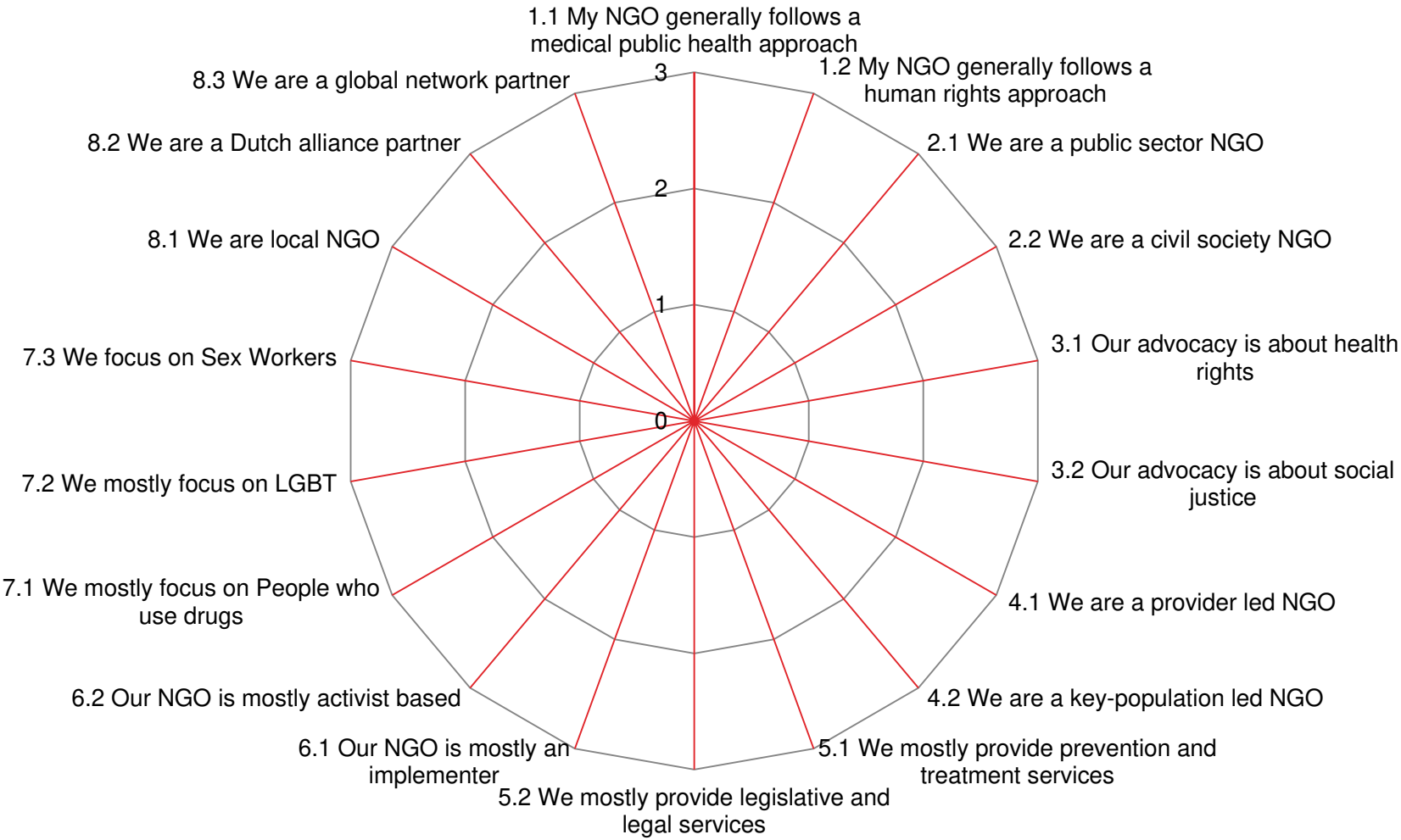
- The end product of this tool should be a jointly agreed agenda for the steps that need to be taken for the partnership.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Introduce the tool objectives and the importance of trust and open communication.
2. Ask plenary to list the important lessons learned of the workshop.
3. Briefly discuss the actions listed in the Toolkit Output based on all the input derived from the workshop. Stress what has been mentioned and what not. Ask whether important topics are still missing.
4. Make sure to agree on the most realistic, urgent and jointly agreed on actions and provide every participant a copy of the final Action Plan.

ANNEX I – POSITIONALITY SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL & SPIDER DIAGRAM

First, place a dot on where the score is for each specific question: 0=not at all, 1=a little bit, 2=a lot, 3=completely. Then connect the dots through a straight line. Finally, mark or shade the areas underneath the line darker.



ANNEX II – PARTNERSHIP BASELINE*

TOPIC	EXPLANATION (IF NEEDED)
Partners involved	
Partner in the lead/informal leader	
Timeline of the partnership	When was the partnership established? Is the partnership time-bound or open-ended?
Purpose of the partnership	What is the common goal of partnerships and the reason(s) why partners are involved?
Agreements made	Is the partnership formal vs informal (specify if there is a MoU/ToR)? Are there agreements on mutual rights and obligations?
Joint actions	What we do, how we work and who we work with?
Stage of partnership	In which stage are we as a partnership? Common stages are: • Identification and mutual 'sounding out' • Negotiation and formalisation • Maintenance • Development and strengthening • (Review and re-negotiation) • Phasing out / ending • (Possible re-generation)
Characteristics of the partnership	For example: 'frustrating, inspiring, worthwhile, ground-breaking, strategic, valuable, frightening, respectful'.
Benefits	What are the main benefits for the organizations to be part of this partnership?
Challenges	Which are the main challenges to effectively collaborate? Common challenges that may be encountered include (also see tool 6 Annex III): • Bridging diversity, communication • Assuring each of the partner's involvement • Acquiring new skills, attitudes, and capacities • Governance / leadership • Non-financial resources (time, capacities, materials)
Best practices	What best practices or advice for effective collaboration can be identified?

**based on (WWF 2018)*

ANNEX III – SELF –ASSESSMENT TOOL TO EVALUATE COLLABORATION

	1 Not at all | 2 Very little | 3 Somewhat | 4 A lot | 5 Completely
1. By working together, do you create an effective synergy?	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Set understandable and supported goals	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Responding to needs of the community	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Obtain support from community / target groups	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Obtain support from government	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Connect variety of knowledge, services, and programs	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Identifying new and creative solutions	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
2. How effectively is the partnership governed?	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Inspiring, motivating, bringing people together	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Taking responsibility, commitment	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Communicating shared vision	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Developing a common language	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Communication to people outside partnership	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Fostering respect, trust, inclusiveness, and openness	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Organizing shared activities	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Decision making	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Resolving conflicts among partners	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Using partners' financial resources	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Using partners' time	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Evaluating the progress and impact	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
3. Does the partnership obtain sufficient non-financial resources?	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Skills and expertise	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Data and information	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Connections to community / target population	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Connections to government	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
4. What is the impact of the partnership?	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Address important issues	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Develop new skills	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Heightened public profile	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Development of valuable relationships	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
More impact than partner on its own	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Additional financial support	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
5. What are the drawbacks of the partnership?	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Waste of time and resources	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Insufficient influence	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Viewed negatively due to association with some partners	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Frustration or aggravation	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
Conflict of interests between partner and partnership	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5
6. Overall, how satisfied are you with the partnership?	1 ---------- 2 ---------- 3 ---------- 4----------5

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