



## Discussing Goals, Roles and Expectations in Community University Partnerships (CUP) – A Framework

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Starting and implementing a Community University Partnership (CUP) in order to tackle a local issue can be challenging. Considering the diversity of the available literature on challenges in CUPs and looking back on our own partnership experiences in the SEU Project (Anderson et al. 2021; Dewaele et al. 2019; Fluegge et al. 2019), we would like to introduce a framework that helps partners to reflect on the (future) collaboration process, especially in the initiation phase of a CUP.

Considering that CUPs bring people from the University and different communities together in order to partner on a relevant issue, we need to assume that CUPs bring also different points of views and orientations in dialog – in a similar way that co-creation processes do (Vandeal et al. 2018). Most probably, the different CUP partners see and interpret the objective of the CUP (in connection with their institutional and personal background) in different ways. Moreover, CUPs can be seen as complex conglomerates (Stier 2011; Stier 2015) of different interests, goals and expectations, subsumed under a (shared) objective which the partners intend to tackle. In line with that, building trust, a shared vision and common goals have been identified as enabling factors for CUP processes (Drahota et al. 2016), while unclear roles, differing views, rival motivations and interests prove to be hindering factors for collaboration processes (Drahota et al. 2016; Giachello 2007; Vandeal et al. 2018), which can lead to conflicts (Williamson et al. 2016; Prins 2005).

CUP processes can hold – as Stier (2014: 162) states – a “high level of tension, conflicts, contradictions, and competing identities, interests and agendas” which influence the collaboration among the partners. Conflicts and discontent often arise from different expectations with regard to the project’s impact and outcomes as well as with regard to the partners’ engagement and their efforts. Unclear roles, unclear responsibilities and unclear accountabilities contribute to that and can lead to a disorientation of the partnership project.

A reflection and discussion of the partners’ understandings, expectations, interest, roles and responsibilities right from the partnership’s initial phase can not only help avoid those distractions but has the potential to build a common ground for the partnership work as well. A discussion should make very clear why the partners are participating, what their expectations, goals and priorities are, and what resources they bring to the partnership. It should offer the opportunity to understand the personal passion (Harney & Wills 2017: 36) of the CUP members and seek clarity with regard to (personal) resources, engagement (limits) and role-expectations. An open and explicit communication can foster productive interpersonal processes and respect as well as positive relationships between partners (Gomez et al. 2018) and has the potential to identify power relationships, differentials, inequality as well as “conflicts of interest” (Adamuti-Trache & Hyle 2015: 75), which are shown to be a significant part of CUPs (Curwood et al. 2011; Adamuti-Trache & Hyle 2015; Giachello, A. (2007); Prins 2005).

The following framework tackles this challenge and can be used as a tool for reflecting and discussing goals, roles, expectations and responsibilities in CUPs transparently right from the start. It can be used to identify, understand and reflect (differing) perspectives and motivations and can help to foster an open and explicit communication amongst the partners – setting up a mutual basis for the collaboration process.



## Goals, Roles and Expectations in Community University Partnerships

Partner Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Background: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Project context</b>	<b>Your perspective on the Partnership-Project</b>
<b>Objectives, outcomes and impact</b>	
How do you define the overall project goal?	
From your perspective, who is the main audience for the project?	
What short-term outcomes you envisage from the project?	
What long-term impact do you envisage from the project?	
Regarding these outcomes and impact, which of them do you prioritize? Why?	
<b>Your interest, role and responsibilities</b>	
What are your professional and/or personal interests?	
What motivates you to collaborate in this project?	
Regarding the project work, where do you see your expertise and competences?	
Where do you see your responsibilities and accountabilities in the partnership?	
How do you understand your role in the partnership?	



<b>Your expectations from other partners</b>	
Where do you see the responsibilities and accountabilities of the other partners?	
What do you expect from the other partners?	
<b>Time, resources and expertise</b>	
How much time would you be able to spend on the partnership work? What are your limits?	
Will your organisation bring any additional resources to the partnership?	
If the collection of research-data is an essential part of the partnership, what would you expect from these data?	
Is there anyone else in your institution to whom this collaboration could be of interest?	
Is there anyone else in your institution whose expertise would be useful to the collaboration?	
<b>Points for further discussions</b>	



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