A Partnership Organizational Structure and Main Position Descriptions

An organizational structure charts the positions and staff officially working in the Partnership. The chart illustrates relations of reporting, authority, and responsibility. The functions of the staff and individuals are also described.

The organizational structure of the Partnership must serve the goals of the Partnership. Over time, there is a tendency for organizational structures to serve specific individuals and/or dynamic processes of the partners and not necessarily those of the Partnership. It is worthwhile examining the organizational structure of the Partnership during the strategic planning process and to align it with the changes in the vision, values and goals of the Partnership.

The Partnership’s Organizational Structure

An organizational structure is the well-defined framework of positions, the relationships between them and serves as a basis for defining the division of organizational activity into organizational entities, functions and areas of authority. The structure channels and regulates the movement of people and material in the organization in an official and binding manner.

The organizational chart includes:

- **Positions** (definition of goals, authority and responsibility)
- **Hierarchal relations between the positions** (authority, giving instructions and reporting)
- **Staff and forums** (regular meetings)

An essential tool meant to assist the Partnership in achieving its strategic goals and leveraging the abilities of its members, the organizational structure is a tool and not a goal in itself.

The design of the organizational structure is one of the most important stages in the strategic planning process. During this stage, the members of the Steering Committee decide on the organizational structure that is most appropriate for the Partnership and the work process that is needed in order to achieve that optimal structure.

According to the working guidelines of Partnership2Gether, each Partnership is managed by an independent Steering Committee, which is composed of a lay leadership from the Jewish community abroad together with Israeli volunteers and representatives of the local authority. In a number of Partnerships, there are additional committees (subcommittees or task forces) that are responsible for a specific area or program in the Partnership. In Partnerships where there has not been a formal strategic planning process, the structure is often a patchwork of temporary arrangements.

It is important that position holders in the Partnership receive a formal title (see the section on defining positions below) and that the various committees receive a precise definition of their positions. If not, a situation is liable to arise in which everyone does everything, everyone is responsible for everything and of course in the end no one is responsible for anything. This situation is likely to harm the ability of the Partnership to act effectively over time.

The recommended “generic” structure for a Partnership includes a Joint Steering Committee, subcommittees and task forces.
Joint Steering Committee

The Steering Committee of the Partnership is an entity that has the power to decide on the nature and character of activity, and the allocation of the budget among the Partnership’s programs. The Steering Committee consists of chairpersons as well as volunteer and professional committee members, who decide on policy and make decisions for the Partnership as a whole.

During the fiscal year, the Steering Committee is likely to meet in three different configurations: the Joint Steering Committee, the Israeli Steering Committee which includes only the Israeli members and the Overseas Steering Committee which includes only the members from abroad.

The Israeli Steering Committee

At least 80 percent of the members of the Steering Committee will be volunteer representatives. The term of a committee member is three years. Heading the Committee is the Israeli Chairperson, who represents all the Israeli partners. The Chairperson is a volunteer public figure from the local community. He/she is a prominent figure, involved in volunteer public endeavors and committed to the values of the Partnership. His/her term is two years with a possibility of extension by an additional two years.

The Functions of the Joint Steering Committee

- Deciding on general policy and the Partnership’s strategic objectives.
- Deciding on the directions of activity and the creation of subcommittees to realize them.
- Determining guidelines for the allocation of the Partnership budget.
- Approval of projects for implementation and overseeing their implementation.

Working Principles of the Joint Steering Committee

- **Identification** – activity based on a commitment to Partnership2Gether values.
- **Consensus** – decision making based on the agreement of all members.
- **Regional and Global Vision** – setting policy that meets the needs of all partners in the Partnership Regions.
- **Mutuality** – aspiring to mutuality between the communities in Israel and abroad.
- **Maximum Influence** – implementation of a small number of meaningful programs which facilitate the expansion of circles of influence.
- **Updated and Relevant** – ongoing verification that the activity is consistent with the objectives.
- **Expansion of Circles** – ongoing activity to expand the circle of participants in the communities in Israel and abroad.

Subcommittees / Task Forces

Subcommittees are created in order to advance issues derived from the Partnership’s vision and the strategic directions. The number of subcommittees in each Partnership is usually derived from the number of the Partnerships’ strategic directions. The subcommittee is composed of volunteers from the Region and from the overseas community, as well as experts in a specific area (volunteers or professional representatives from local government).
Functions of the Subcommittee

- Evaluation of projects and programs and the submission of recommendations to the Steering Committee.
- Reporting to the Steering Committee on the implementation of projects within the subcommittee's areas of responsibility.
- Invitation to experts, project implementers and those with ideas for projects in the Region to be presented to the Steering Committee.

Following is an example of a generic organizational structure for a Partnership:

Defining positions increases the efficacy of the Partnership by promoting the following:

- Clarity of the division between functions: responsibility, role ownership, authority of position and the allocation of responsibility.
- Wise selection of candidates for a position.
- Appropriate training for a position.

Defining the functions will include topics such as:

- The selection process: the procedure for appointing members and position holders.
- The term of the position (members and chairpersons).
- The authority and responsibility of the various position holders.
- *The Management Pyramid*: identifying the position holders who must submit reports and the format of these reports.
- Define the outputs of the various position holders.
- Define the background, experience and knowledge required by position holders.
Definition of the Main Positions in a Partnership

The Position of Partnership Chairperson

The position of Partnership Chairperson (or Chairpersons) is similar to a Chairperson of a Board, i.e. he/she directs policy. This is in contrast to a CEO whose function it is to implement policy (which is the main function of a Partnership Director).

The main function of the Chairperson is to intelligently navigate the Partnership with both a short- and long-term perspective. The job includes determining objectives and ways to evaluate effectiveness (are the goals being met?) and efficiency (are resources being used as they should?) of the Partnership.

The role includes; representation of the Partnership to the public, marketing the Partnership, and positioning the Partnership in order to obtain resources the Partnership needs to function (including legitimacy, public support, financial resources, expertise and appropriate manpower).

The Position of Subcommittee Chairperson

The function of the Subcommittee Chairperson can be divided into three parts:

a. The Subcommittee Chairperson is the link between the Steering Committee of the Partnership and the vision of the Partnership as a whole on the one hand, and the committee that he/she heads on the other hand. Thus, he has the important function of the two-way transfer of information. He presents the needs/working processes, implementation, etc. of the subcommittee to the Partnership Steering Committee. He also represents the policy and the Steering Committee to the subcommittee (that he heads).

b. A Subcommittee Chairperson is responsible for the proper function of the subcommittee, including scheduling, decision making, issuing of tenders, selection of projects and the guidance and evaluation of projects. He also manages the activities of the committee members and the area of interest that the subcommittee is responsible for (for example: education, welfare, Living Bridge, etc.).

c. The Subcommittee Chairperson is responsible for proper management (from a legal and an ethical point of view) and optimal use of the Partnership’s resources.
Project Trustees

A project trustee is a member of the Steering Committee or a subcommittee who is chosen by the Committee to accompany a project being implemented by the Partnership. The functions of the project trustee include:

- Assistance in building the project card with emphasis on maintaining consistency with the Partnership’s vision.
- Periodic observation of the project’s activity and monitoring whether it is meeting the program’s objectives, as defined in the project card.
- Creating a beneficial and ongoing dialog with the project trustees abroad.
- Submitting regular reports and updates to the committee responsible for the project.

General Partnership role descriptions can be found in the P2G Knowledge Center.

Recruitment – Absorption – Training – Completion of Term

The quality of the volunteers in a Partnership determines the quality of its work. Therefore, the Partnership must constantly be working to be a “magnet” for qualified volunteers with the appropriate skills. The members of the Partnership must be constantly searching the Partnership environment for qualified people and persuade them to join the Partnership.

On taking up a position, a new volunteer in the Partnership will be given the definition of the function, a description of their tasks and of the Partnership’s expectations of them. It is worthwhile that every new volunteer in the Partnership be assigned a “mentor:” a veteran liaison in the Partnership (or in a different Partnership in the case of a new Partnership) who will provide guidance to the new volunteer for at least the first six months of their position.

Candidates for senior positions in the Partnership (for example, Chairpersons) will be appointed to their position at least six month prior to the end of the term of their predecessor, in order for them to take part in day-to-day activity and in order for them to be trained for the position. The Jewish Agency is to provide the necessary training for individuals appointed to a senior position.

Each position must have a defined starting date and completion date. Each position must also have rules (such as: it is permitted to serve more than one term and under what conditions). For example, it is recommended that the Chairperson’s term be two years with the option of an additional two years. This does not prevent a former Chairperson from serving in other positions in the Partnership in order to build on his motivation and experience. It is also important that a volunteer in a regular position (such as an escort for a Living Bridge project) will have a defined term in order to be able to renew the appointment after a certain period, if the volunteer has proven his value to the Partnership.