A Handbook for Funder Collaborations

Tools and resources for strategic co-funding

JEWISH FUNDERS NETWORK

If you are a funder who is thinking of starting or joining a funder collaboration, this handbook will help you think about the pros and cons, the benefits and challenges, and offer you to the tools to ask the right questions and structure the collaboration for success and sustainability.

JEWISH FUNDERS NETWORK

Section 1: **Overview**

Many funders recognize that no single grantee can effect system-wide change alone. But they are also aware that the same applies to givers themselves. From mega-philanthropic mergers to local community efforts, collaborations - rather than solo efforts - have achieved some of the most ground-breaking social change programs today.

Effective co-funding partnerships require both sensitive planning and sensible expectations. Yet surprisingly few studies and tools are available to those considering such synergies. JFN has had the privilege to convene and facilitate the birth and development of a number of collaborations, and to learn first-hand about the do's and don'ts, the successful practices and predictable pitfalls of such collective undertakings.

This insider's guide is designed to offer philanthropists, private foundations, community foundations and federations practical tips on what to expect from a strategic funder collaboration and how best to ensure its success.

To further guide you, self-assessment tools and templates are included at the end of this handbook:

Tool 1: Are you the partnering type?
A self-assessment tool for a funder or foundation considering a collaboration

Tool 2: Should you start a new funder collaboration?
A self-assessment tool for lead funders

Tool 3: Checklist for starting a collaboration

Tool 4: Sample Template for a Memorandum of Understanding

This handbook draws on a comprehensive review of existing research and articles on funder collaborations, as well as on interviews with 27 stakeholders (lead funders, joining funders, funders who didn't join or exited, collaboration managers, grantees, field experts and evaluators). The interviewees referred to six Israel-based pooled funding partnerships.

Funder collaborations in Israel were chosen as the investigation field for two reasons. First, most of the stakeholders are familiar with JFN staff who conducted the in-person intake meetings. This allowed for candor and open conversations. Second, Israel hosts a disproportionate number of funder collaborations (many of them cross-cultural) relative to its size. There are several explanations for this:

- Israel's small but innovative economy and the country's entrepreneurial and improvisational spirit (with the highest density of start-ups in the world) make it an ideal beta site where large ideas can be tested—and rewarded.
- High-impact and high-visibility funder collaborations whet the appetite for additional collective efforts.
- Israel's relatively small pool of funders enjoy the kind of relationships and trust that pave a smooth path toward new partnerships.
- Israel offers a unique environment in which funders from abroad who want to have strategic impact can far more easily accomplish that in cooperation with local funders.

Section 2: What do we mean by "funder collaborations"?

Funder collaborations come in various shapes and sizes, and serve various needs. Common forms of funder collaborations include:

Peer networks – Communities of funders who educate themselves jointly about a particular field of interest, share best practices, learn from each other and sometimes collaborate.

Strategic alignments – Funders share common priorities and objectives, but maintain independent decision processes, and often different recipients.

Targeted co-funding – Funders decide on common grantmaking to an agreed upon issue or grantee, but maintain independent direct giving.

Pooled funding – In this, the highest form of partnership, funders donate to a single pool, which is then used collectively without distinguishing between the original donors.[1] Funders in this type of collaboration share a common vision, objectives and metrics of success.

The latter co-funding models often grow out of peer networks and strategic alignments. For the purposes of this handbook, we focus on the latter form: collaborations that involve pooled resources and collective grantmaking that addresses a specific problem or promotes a particular issue.

Our case studies include:

1. *Shahaf Foundation* – Supporting young communities in Israel's geographic and social periphery
2. *The Opportunity Fund* – Encouraging marginalized populations to participate in high-quality national civic service
3. *Disabilities Roundtable* – Raising public awareness and improving accessibility for people with disabilities in public areas
4. *The Israeli Public Forum for Youth Villages and Boarding Schools for Children at Risk*
5. *Green Environment Fund* – Catalyzing Israel's environmental movement (2001 – 2014)
6. *Committed to Give* – Promoting private philanthropy in Israel

Each of these funder collaborations are strategic in the sense that they have articulated a clear common mission, goals, success measures, and a governance structure, as well as a multi-year commitment of funds. All but one involve a cross-border partnership between funders from Israel, the US and/or Europe.

Future handbooks may focus on other funder collaboration models.

Section 3: When to collaborate?

Collaborations do not always supply the best vehicle for effecting change or solving a problem. In some cases, a single funder can react faster, take greater risks, and solve a problem single-handedly.

[1] Cynthia Gair, "Strategic Co-Funding: An Approach for Expanded Impact," REDF and GEO, 2012.

Funder collaborations should be favored when:

Issue	▪ The problem is sufficiently large and complex to require collective action. ▪ The issue is multidimensional enough to attract several funders. ▪ A broad consensus and plurality of voices can more effectively create system-wide change, influence national priorities or address a sensitive issue. ▪ You share common interests with other funders.
Scope	▪ Acting alone means lacking the necessary funds, influence, or collective wisdom to make a difference. ▪ The collaboration has the potential to be a game changer.
Timing	▪ A sense of urgency can motivate a broad array of funders. ▪ The collaboration can be a major player in a small and growing field, lending a substantial resource and voice at a critical time.
Leadership	▪ A funder, or a group of funders, are committed to championing a joint effort. ▪ Leaders are modest and willing to respect divergent views, interests and agendas.
Synergy	▪ The collaboration can leverage the cumulative experience and relationships of its partners. ▪ Alternatively, a collaboration can afford access to expertise which individual funders couldn't justify separately. ▪ The partners bring different skills and added values to the collaboration.
Modeling	▪ Funders often encourage their grantees to work together. An effective collaboration offers funders the chance to lead by example.

Section 4: **What is a successful collaboration?**

Most research on funder collaborations (see section on "sources of reading") concludes that the success of a collaboration should be measured on two planes: the outcomes it achieves and the needs it serves for the participating funders.

The first measure of success is obvious: At its inception, a funder collaboration defines its metrics with respect to both interim and long-term goals. Meeting those goals and accomplishing something meaningful represents success.

When the desired change requires time, the collaboration's success will also be measured by its ability to withstand the inevitable turnover and exit of partners.

But there is another critical measurement of success: serving your own needs as a funding partner. For some, this may involve gaining the kinds of knowledge and experience only available through the collaboration. For others, it may involve the pleasures of meaningful shared learning or of having equal voice with well-respected funders and foundations. For lead funders, it may offer the satisfaction of expanding interest in a particular field and the gratification inherent in collective action.

> A collaboration is when everyone puts their agenda on the table, and together create something new. Success is when you espouse and care for the collaboration as much as you care for your own program/agenda.
> ***- David Gidron***
> *Social psychologist and accompanying researcher of The Opportunity Fund*

Funder Collaborations: Benefits and Challenges

Benefits

- Collective action - achieving large-scale goals with significant impact
- Collective power - exerting greater influence, enjoying wider legitimacy
- Collective wisdom - pluralistic perspectives allow for more nuanced thinking
- Risk sharing
- Leveraging each partner's expertise and relationships
- Strong combined resource and partner to the NGOs and other stakeholders
- Economies of scale: low overhead for funders; a single funding partner and grant process for grantees
- Fruitful dialogue between players of different sizes and types
- Platform for facilitating cross-cultural cooperation
- Relationships extend to other grantmaking activities
- Rewards and gratifications of working together

Challenges

- Everything takes longer
- High investment of time in developing and maintaining the collaboration
- Loss of independence in controlling funds and their allocation
- Peer pressure to operate outside comfort zone
- Reduced acknowledgment of the funder or foundation
- Compromise may have an inhibiting effect and make a funding strategy more risk-averse
- A dominant collaboration may homogenize a field, drying it out for other NGOs or ideas
- Difficult to sustain high levels of passion and enthusiasm over time

Section 5: **Is a collaboration right for you?**

Funder collaborations may be right for you if:

- You have the patience to persuade partners to agree on a common agenda.
- You recognize that collective influence is well worth your investment of time and patience.
- You don't mind sharing the spotlight - and the credit.
- You respect and trust the lead funders, believing their accumulated knowledge and relationships can move you up the impact ladder.
- You are willing to surrender some control over process and outcome in order to achieve the greater goal.
- Your foundation structure is flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate a different funding model.

> *Foundation professionals may feel threatened by a collaboration, which adds another level of authority and a new trusted resource in the funder's line of vision.*

Funder collaborations often require many months to materialize. Needless to say, building relationships and trust takes time, as does finding a common thread and direction that feels right for everyone. Only you know if you have the necessary patience and perseverance.

Tool 1 helps funders assess whether funder collaborations are right for them or their funding organizations (pages 18-20).

> It's kind of like marriage. You need to be willing to give up some of your principles because you think that the plural is better than the singular. You need to be willing to give, not just gain. You need to want to engage in dialogue, not monologue.
>
> ***- Benny Levin***
>
> *Israeli philanthropist and member of The Israeli Public Forum for Youth Villages and Boarding Schools for Children at Risk*

Section 6: **How to start a funder collaboration**

The success or failure of any structure, be it an edifice or a partnership, depends on the first building blocks. For funder collaborations, those essential cornerstones are direction, leadership, structure, relationships and facilitation.

1. **Confront a problem** – Lead funders must clearly articulate, at the very beginning, the problem they are trying to solve, their vision for addressing it, and their definition of success. Although these definitions may evolve over time, most successful funder collaborations begin with a clearly articulated mission, goals, guiding principles, and both long-term and interim metrics. Such metrics ideally take account both of the operating outcomes (e.g., expanding the number of young communities from 25 to 350) and of the partnership itself (e.g., creating an international collaboration that will invest at least $50 million over 10 years).

   Defining the scope of the partnership includes describing its funding priorities, areas of activity, target audiences, types of activities (e.g., grantmaking vs. operating), type of support (e.g., general support, capacity building, programs, evaluation), grant cycle, and allocation structure (e.g., give all funds each year or create endowment). At the same time, lead funders should be equally clear about their red lines: how much they are willing to compromise in terms of field, activities, and size of investment. In the interests of consensus, the innovative and risky intentions not uncommonly give way to the safe center.

   Initial directions should be specific enough to break ground and create impact, yet broad enough to attract multiple partners - not an easy act of balance.

2. **Follow the leader** – An effective leader ignites the flame and keeps it burning. In launching a collaboration, one funder (or a group of funders) must take the lead, define the problem, chart the direction, explain the urgency, make the commitment, convince others to join, and mitigate differences as they arise.

   Most collaborations start with a committed funder. This could be a foundation executive or a small group of strategic thinkers who recognize a problem, are confident of philanthropy's capacity to address it, and are willing to commit their time, resources and clout to cement the partnership.

   Collaboration champions often make a large investment in the beginning by funding the overhead and hosting the initial structure. Leaders recruit the first partners, and appoint the initial facilitator of the emerging partnership with an eye toward attractive potential collaborators.

Tool 2 helps lead funders assess whether they should initiate a funder collaboration (pages 21-22).

3. **Create structure** – Process is a significant part of collaborative progress. Alongside the first articulation of the problem and suggested solution, funders must agree on a basic definition of the backbone of an emerging funding partnership, so partners know what is expected of them in terms of investment of time and resources.

   Before new funders join, it is a good idea to draft a first concept of the governance of the emerging collaboration, legal responsibility, financial auspices, administration duties, overhead ceiling, time commitment and the expectations of each partner. This initial blueprint will likely change as new partners come aboard and the collaboration becomes a reality, but the failure to set expectations can cripple a new partnership.

4. **It's all about people** – In many instances, the first funders to join a collaboration are those who have prior acquaintance with and appreciation for each other; they have funded similar programs over the years, served on the same boards, participated in the same conferences, or shared business ties.

   With or without the benefits of prior acquaintance, however, funder collaborations depend on **building relationships and trust,** neither of which can be rushed. In the first months, the social component cannot be understated; a substantial portion of the time together is invested in nurturing inter-personal relationships and learning about each other's legacy. It is critical, then, that funders and professional staff be present during the "courting" period, when potential partners learn together about their field of interest, define the scope of their joint effort, and take ownership of the emerging collaboration.

5. **The impartial convener** – Although lead funders often have a wide network of acquaintances, and may feel that they can build relationships without an intermediary, it is crucial that an external organization or professional is brought on board early in the process to convene and facilitate the nascent partnership. It is tempting to have the lead funder serve that role, but an outside convener has several advantages: access to potential participants outside the lead funders' networks; the impartiality to create an open space that is not owned by a particular funder; and the skills to facilitate the initial

conversations and connections among the group. A capable facilitator will meet each potential partner privately throughout the courting process, take note of their interests and motivations, make certain that all voices are heard, "translate" each partner's culture and terminology, as well as mitigate potential conflicts and frustrations.

Both lead funders and potential participants must be open and transparent about potential areas of controversy, widely differing ideologies, or conflicts of interest.

JFN has convened and facilitated several funder collaborations. In all instances, it took somewhere between several months to two years to move from concept to partnership. Funder collaborations that did not materialize suffered from lack of time to build relationships, ambiguity about the direction, misunderstanding about the process, leadership that lacked the passion and perseverance, inability to convene enough interested parties and keep them engaged, or a disgruntled partner who spoiled the experience for all others.

> Choosing philanthropic partners is quite different from choosing business partners. In both cases you need to have a level of trust, but whereas in business your partners rank high for their business acumen, in a philanthropic partnership having similar principles and social beliefs are the prerequisites.
>
> ***- Avi Naor***
>
> *Israeli philanthropist, founder of Shahaf Foundation, and co-founder of the Public Forum*

Section 7: **Formalizing a funder collaboration**

In their landmark article on "collective impact," John Kania and Mark Kramer write: "The expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons why it fails."[2] Funder collaborations require some level of structure and backbone. There may be an understandable reluctance to underwrite an additional administrative entity. But it is critical to assign responsibilities among the partners, or to engage a professional who is dedicated

[2] John Kania and Mark Kramer, "Collective Impact," Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter 2011.

to the collaboration's organization, management and maintenance.

Tool 3 is a checklist for collaborations starting out, outlining the various tasks and defining the division of responsibilities among stakeholders (pages 23-24).

In order to attract partners, and to be clear about the "what," "how," "who," and "when" of the partnership, funders should come to an understanding about:

Strategy

Defining the problem – The most important building block of any combined effort is to agree on the problem that needs to be addressed, and the limits that the founding partners wish to set. (Example: the problem is accessibility in public spaces for people with disabilities. Initial limit for the partnership – 25 big cities).

Common direction – Define a common vision, purpose, measurable objectives, main activities (e.g., grantmaking vs. operating functions, single vs. multi-year commitments), *modus operandi* (e.g., promote field among funders, program support, information sharing, advocacy), type of support (e.g., general support, capacity building, programs, evaluation), grantmaking process vis-à-vis the grantees, internal auditing, and strategic plan.

Setting expectations – Clarify the grant cycle; allocations (given year vs. endowment); overhead ceiling (funders should recognize the need for research, backbone, and maintaining partner relations); division of responsibilities; and expectations from each partner (e.g., recruiting new partners).

Partnership

Composition – Estimate the target number of partners in the collaboration; types of partners that can join (e.g., individuals, foundations, community foundations, federations, corporations, government agencies, nonprofit organizations), taking into account divergent operating structures and cultures; local vs. distant partners (e.g., Israeli vs. overseas).

> "In our collaboration experience, a mix of local and overseas philanthropy is very powerful. The Israelis bring the local expertise, the know-how to work with government, and close relationships with grantees, and serve as a 'cultural translator' between our understanding of the Israeli scene and the actual Israeli context. The overseas partners add value by bringing years of experience in program development, implementation and evaluation - but it is only because of the strength of and mutual respect between the Israeli and Diaspora partners that we are able to successfully leverage our expertise to benefit the enterprise."
>
> ***- Julie Sandorf***
>
> *President, Charles H. Revson Foundation and co-lead funder of Opportunity Fund*

Scope – Define the pool size; minimum/maximum investment per partner; desired commitment time; cash vs. in-kind participation; exit strategy for partners; policy with respect to extending the collaboration's time frame or its dissolution. Also determine flexibility in terms of investment size and duration: Will funders with lesser means be allowed to join? Will funders be allowed to join in "baby steps," by committing for one year at a time?

> *When defining the desired partnership scope, keep in mind the pros and cons. An expanded collaboration means more funds, greater potential impact, and more collective wisdom. But new partners may also add complexity as they disturb the intimacy already achieved, add more administrative layers, and dilute the voices of existing partners.*

Structure

A flexible and informal structure best suits a collaboration in its first years, allowing incoming partners to exchange pro bono resources and insights. Still, partners should agree on:

Entity – Should the collaboration establish a separate entity, or be hosted by another organization, which will provide the legal, financial and administrative functions? Choose a legal entity that allows donors of different nationalities a tax deduction for their allocations to the collaboration.

Legal responsibility – Who is legally responsible for the collaboration? Has attention been given to making sure each partner is not at separate legal risk?

Financial accountability – Who is the fiscal agent? Who manages investment of the funds? Who manages the collaboration's day-to-day financial decisions and administration?

Rules of governance

Funder collaborations may take years to progress to a signed memorandum of understanding and formal legal entity, if at all. Yet early agreement about the decision-making processes and power granted to the participants can be exceptionally useful.

Governing committee – Define the number of members; nominate committee members (e.g., lay only, staff, independent directors, NGO representatives); nominate a chairman; and agree on committee responsibilities (e.g., strategy, policy, budget, investments, work plan, evaluation), decision-making processes, voting rights (e.g., relative to investment size vs. equal to all), voting principles (majority rule, executive, consensus, veto power), number of committee meetings, and signatories.

Subcommittees – Establish executive committee and (if necessary) subcommittees; determine responsibilities of committees.

> *Don't hurry to create layers of subcommittees. Give responsibilities to partners ad hoc according to skills and context.*

Management

Staff – Appoint a collaboration manager and staff according to need (e.g., field expert vs. logistics and administration). Alternatively, divide responsibilities among partners. Define responsibilities, including: work plan, budgets, meeting agendas, content, vetting, grant administration, monitoring, reporting, ongoing communication with participating funders, partners and beneficiaries, and administrative support.

Committees – Establish executive committee and subcommittees, if necessary, leveraging each partner's unique values.

> *In the first couple of years, funder collaborations are often administered by the original partners, who take it upon themselves to fund the overhead, thus allowing all pooled funds to be directed to the collaboration's objectives. Dedicated staff is usually hired if and when the size of the partnership and the complexity of its undertaking grows.*

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Some experts advise starting with an MoU that outlines much of the above. Others believe it may be too intimidating at the beginning of a relationship, and should be drafted and signed at a later stage. At any rate, an MoU, as well as a covenant on the common direction, helps ensure that all participating funders share expectations and guiding principles.

Tool 4 is a sample MoU that outlines some of the basic issues to be included (page 25).

Collaborations often choose an interim framework, operating agent, and management until permanent structures are in place.

Tips for the Collaboration's Manager

- Managing the partnership is as much your responsibility as achieving the collaboration's objectives. Expect to spend at least a quarter of your time cultivating the partnership itself.
- Learn what's most important to each partner and work with that knowledge in mind.
- Invest time (and more time) in preparing for board meetings. Engage each partner in particular and the group as a whole.
- Educate – the partners rely on you to keep them abreast of new knowledge, bring in field experts, plan joint site visits, and stay apprised of the collaboration's work.
- Write an "orientation plan" for new partners so they adequately understand what they are buying into. Be clear about the collaboration, how it works, and what is expected of them.
- Do not allow yourself to be swayed too much by one funder (especially the lead funder). Keep in mind that this is a group effort.
- You are a juggler responsible for keeping all balls in the air, keeping all partners in the loop, managing all the tasks, as well as mediating and mitigating any conflicts.

Section 8: A view from the trenches

This handbook draws on the accumulated experience of funders, professionals, collaboration managers and other stakeholders who experience funder collaborations first-hand. Here are their observations about the ingredients of success:

Urgency - A funder collaboration rests on a sense of urgency, a problem that needs to be solved, a pressing need, a common frustration, or a window of opportunity. Driven by this urgency, it addresses an issue large enough to require collective power, yet manageable enough for philanthropy to create impact.

Collaboration leadership – Collaborations crucially depend on a lead funder or small group of funders that take ownership and are as committed to this collaboration as they are to their independent philanthropic efforts. Lead funders must invest more time and resources than others, maintain equal voting rights in spite of the disproportionate commitment, and leave their egos at the door.

Lay leadership – It is not enough to have the professionals at the table; optimally, lay leadership actively engages in building relationships, in making decisions, and in participating in board meetings.

Patience – It takes time for partners to acquire a common terminology, bring everyone to a level playing field, and learn to accommodate one another. This is especially true when partners come together from different organizational cultures or nationalities. Collaborations often take many months to mature from concept to action, but not so long as to cause unnecessary frustration.

Trust – Collaborations rest on good chemistry, productive personal relationships, common interests and trust. If such trust doesn't develop in the early stages, it's best not to force the partnership.

Transparency – Open and transparent communication about each partner's interests and needs will help define boundaries and smooth the process of building a collaboration.

Respect – tolerating the differences between the funders is one thing. Respecting divergent opinions and priorities actually brings original value to the collaboration.

Synergy – Successful collaborations recognize the added value of each partner and harness each partner's unique abilities.

Partnership – there needs to be real long-term commitment of each member to the collaboration; this is not yet another grant but something of your own.

Local translation – Involving local philanthropists offers a better understanding of the local landscape, connections to key stakeholders, and familiarity with the grantees.

Equal footing – When possible, grant all partners an equal voice and voting rights.

Backbone – there needs to be a clearly defined body that is responsible for managing and running the partnership.

Management – Hire a competent professional who is mindful, on the one hand, of the interests of the collaboration and its partners, and on the other hand knows how to navigate the space between the funders and the field at large.

Communication – Clear and frequent communication among partners is as critical in the early relationship building and negotiation stages as it is to the long-term interests throughout the collaboration's life.

Measurements – Collaborations should measure outcomes against objectives. Aim high but also design interim metrics to track progress along the way. Long-term collaborations should re-evaluate success parameters every few years, and modify them according to the changing reality.

Collaborations that involve partners of different nationalities and cultures add diversity but also require additional attention to mitigating differences of language, terminology and business conduct.

Five lessons

1. Collaborations require time and patience, not just resources.
2. Defining clear goals, governance structure, and evaluation methods are critical components of early growth.
3. Backbone support is a must in managing the new joint effort.
4. Communication is vital. It is the responsibility of the collaboration's manager, as well as each partner, to stay connected, informed and engaged.
5. Collaboration funders must be able to shift from their customary grantmaking perspective to a strategic co-funding mindset.

"Many funders who join funder collaborations are well-intentioned but misguided, applying old standards to new behavior. Collaborators should be looking at mission, not organization; trust, not control; humility, not self-promotion; and at their role as a node, not the hub."

- Jane Wei-Skillern

Associate Adjunct Professor, UC Berkeley Haas School of Business

Tool 1: **Are you the partnering type?**

A self-assessment tool for a funder or philanthropic organization considering joining a funder collaboration

You serve yourself best if you enter into a funder collaboration with your eyes wide open, having candidly asked yourself whether your personality or organization structure can endure the complexities of a partnership and reap its rewards. You, your board of directors, or your executive staff can use this checklist to assess your fit. For each question, consider the relevance to you and your philanthropic structure.

1. Are you the partnering type?

As an individual, do you tend to partner in your business ventures?

As a funder or foundation, do you often cooperate with other funders?

*Be sure to focus on **your** partnership preferences, and not on the expectations of your grantees.*

A partner at heart — Solo player

2. Would you enjoy participating in a funder collaboration?

	Yes	No
▪ Is partnering part of your world view and value system?		
▪ Do you enjoy working with others?		
▪ Do you enjoy learning together, sharing thoughts and ideas?		
▪ Would you rather sit in the VIP row and cut the ribbon alone or enjoy the occasion with fellow funders?		

3. Would you benefit from joining a funder collaboration?

	Yes	No
Do you believe that a single funder cannot achieve what a group of funders can?		
Do you prefer exerting wide influence on a field to supporting a particular organization or program?		
Do you believe that a wider pluralistic perspective of different stakeholders creates better, deeper thinking?		

4. Do you have what it takes to successfully collaborate?

	Yes	No
Collaborations may not fall within your established giving structure. Can your foundation engage in a funding model that doesn't fall within traditional categories (e.g., operating, capital)?		
Getting everyone to agree on a common agenda and be on the same page may take many months. Can you brave such a long courting period in order to reap the rewards of strategic co-funding?		
In funder collaborations, your own visibility will be less prominent. Is cutting the tape and/or naming significant to you/your foundation?		
Are you willing to engage in true dialogue, knowing you won't be the one calling the shots?		
Are you willing to offer an equal voice to all funders in the room?		

5. Is the particular funder collaboration you are considering right for you?

	Yes	No
Is the issue relevant to your fields of interest?		
Are the desired outcomes aligned with your philanthropic agenda?		
Are you clear about your gain from entering into this collaboration?		
Can you foresee a conflict of interest between your foundation's strategy and the collaboration's direction?		
Do you respect and trust the lead funder of the collaboration?		
Do you believe the other funders or the collaboration structure can move you up the impact ladder?		

"We joined because we believed in the accumulated knowledge of the lead funders in the field and in their already established relationships with key stakeholders. We wanted to be part of this effort to create a new field."

- Shlomit de Vries

CEO, Ted Arison Family Foundation

Partner in the Shahaf Foundation, Opportunity Fund, and Public Forum collaborations

Tool 2: **Should you start a new funder collaboration?**

A self-assessment tool for lead funders

If you are considering starting a funder collaboration, ask yourself whether you are qualified and whether your chosen area of interest is relevant for a funder collaboration structure.

1. Is the problem you are addressing appropriate for a funder collaboration?

a. Is the issue large enough to require strategic co-funding?
b. Can the collaboration attract a sufficiently wide pool of potential funders?
c. Is there real value in the voice of the many versus the influence of one funder?
d. Can philanthropy really make the difference you envision?

2. Are you the collaboration champion type?

a. Do you have the commitment to "sell" the collaboration to other funders?
b. Can you demonstrate the benefits of synergy and explain why working together is better than working alone?
c. Are you able to identify the desired partners, in terms of the added value they can bring to the partnership (above and beyond the pooled funds)?
d. Do you have the modesty to acknowledge that you can't do it alone?

3. Do you have the necessary patience?

Sometimes what is clear to the champion of the cause may be unclear to others.

a. Are you willing to wait until other funders feel comfortable with the task at hand and the solution you are promoting?
b. Will you allow potential participants to enter in baby steps (i.e., allow them to begin with a smaller investment, to observe before making a commitment, or to make a one-year commitment)?
c. Can you respect partners that are vastly different from you in terms of culture, organizational cultures, *modus operandi*, decision-making processes, and reporting needs?
d. Do you have exit intentions in the foreseeable future or are you willing to stick it out for the collaboration's full life cycle?

4. Can you compromise in order to reach consensus?

a. Can you espouse the opinions of others?

b. Will you be willing to modify some of the original principles of the collaboration in response to your partners' inputs?

c. Would you be willing to lower the investment threshold in order to attract a wider forum?

5. Are you willing to invest more time and resources than other partners?

Collaboration champions often invest more in the collaboration, especially at the outset. They may fund the backbone infrastructure and recruit the initial partners, while reserving for themselves an equal voice to the rest.

> "In partnership, you leverage your mission, strategy and ability to gain valuable insights from your peers. We lose our ability to maximize our effectiveness by working alone."
>
> ***- Jay Ruderman***
>
> *President, Ruderman Family Foundation*
>
> *Co-lead funder, Disabilities Roundtable*

Tool 3: **Checklist for Starting a Collaboration**

Funder collaborations are advised to define the direction and structure, as well as be clear about the division of responsibilities among the collaboration's stakeholders.

	Who is responsible?			
	Lead funder	**All partners**	**Convener**	**Collab. manager**
Strategic direction				
▪ Vision, mission and goals				
▪ *Modus operandi*				
▪ Main activities				
▪ Measurable success factors				
▪ Preliminary strategic plan				
Desired collaboration				
▪ Type of collaboration (pooled funding, strategic alignment, learning community)				
▪ Size of collaboration (# of partners)				
▪ Target investment size				
▪ Donation level per partner				
▪ Minimum time commitment (# of years)				
Partner recruitment				
▪ Identifying target donor population				
▪ Convening potential participants				
▪ Creating the content for initial meetings				
▪ Recruiting new partners				
▪ Welcome kit for new partners				

	Who is responsible?			
	Lead funder	All partners	Convener	Collab. manager
Structure				
▪ Defining legal and fiscal structure				
▪ Defining governance structure				
▪ Drafting memorandum of understanding				
Management				
▪ Assigning a convener and early-stage facilitator				
▪ Assigning a collaboration coordinator/manager				
Legal responsibility				
Preliminary or provisional infrastructure (until permanent structure)				
▪ Legal responsibility				
▪ Financial hosting				
▪ Management and administrative responsibility				
Marketing and communications				
▪ Orientation plan and kit for new members				
▪ Ongoing communication with ALL partners				

Tool 4: **Memorandum of Understanding Template**

A Memorandum of Understanding defines the guidelines and boundaries of a collaboration. It may take the form of a legal document or a more informal format, may be amended to each partner's needs or be uniform, be signed or unsigned.

Sample Template

Memorandum of Understanding
Between
<Funder Collaboration Name> and Funder

Purpose – One paragraph which defines the purpose and scope of the MoU, outlining the terms of the agreement.

General description of the collaboration – Vision, mission, objectives, main activities, *modus operandi*, and intended success parameters.

Guiding principles – Various issues that guide the collaboration's operating principles.

Collaboration structure – Definition of the legal entity, financial accountability, ownership structure, and management.

Governance – Description of decision-making responsibilities of collaboration, governing committee structure, and subcommittees.

Rights and obligations – Outline of each partner's rights (e.g., voting rights, assignment of board members) and obligations (e.g., participation in pre-defined number of governing committee meetings per year, time and resources to be committed, participation in committees). Especially important to address partners of different levels, and new partners.

Contracting period – Articulation of the commitment's time-frame and exit options.

Monetary commitment – Specification of payment amounts and schedules, designating specific time-frames and dollar amounts to be invested at each stage.

Compliance – Inclusion of a monitoring component, and a termination clause if the terms of the MoU are not fulfilled.

Effective date – Date on which the agreement takes effect.

Signature Funder collaboration Date:	Signature Funder name Date:

Funder Collaboration

CASE STUDIES

Shahaf Foundation

Shahaf Foundation

Co-funding structure: Pooled funding

Issue area: Young communities in Israel's geographic and social periphery

Total investment to date: $6,000,000

Established: 2010

Lead funder: Avi Naor

Participating funders: Oran Foundation, Gandyr Foundation, The Jewish Agency, Rashi Foundation, Steinhardt Foundation, Mario Segal, Arison Foundation, Yad Hanadiv, The Morningstar Foundation, Meyerhoff Family Charitable Funds, JDC, Russell Berrie Foundation, UJA – NY Federation, Shaul and Batia Shani, Doron Livnat, Ness Foundation, The United Jewish Endowment Fund of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, anonymous donors from Israel and abroad

Investment size per partner: Full partners contribute at least $150,000/year

Commitment time: 3 years

Geographic reach: Israel

For more information: www.shahaff.com/24/

The Shahaf Foundation is a philanthropic partnership that supports a network of 180 young communities located in over 70 urban locations in marginalized towns and neighborhoods in Israel. Shahaf aims to help establish another 170 communities over the next five years. Operating as a philanthropic investment fund, Shahaf allocates grants and provides professional support to empower young communities and affiliated organizations. The foundation takes a "hands-on" approach, providing multi-year support to the communities, while conducting ongoing evaluations of measurable outcomes.

Achievements to Date

The Shahaf Foundation partnership has successfully met many of its long-term goals.

- Shahaf is an accelerator of the young communities phenomenon, having provided seed funding for 85 communities and capacity-building support for veteran communities.
- Direct support in the amount of $5,500,000.
- Leveraging additional foundation support and government investment, for a total investment of $18,000,000.
- Key player in development of "city models" – groups of communities in the same city that join to create holistic solutions to aid in the city's advancement. There are currently four such city models: Jerusalem, Lod, Haifa and Be'er-Sheva.
- Guidance and support for the establishment of the Communities Council, which brings together representatives from all young communities in Israel - religious, secular, immigrants, Arab communities and more.

> **What are the necessary ingredients for successful funder collaborations?**
> - Joint vision and set of values agreed upon by the partners
> - Clear governance structure
> - Long-term commitment
> - High level of partner involvement

קרן הזדמנות לקידום השירות האזרחי
THE OPPORTUNITY FUND FOR CIVIC SERVICE

The Opportunity Fund

Co-funding structure: Pooled funding

Issue area: Voluntarism, civic society, minorities, at-risk and disabled young adults

Total investment to date: $4,707,000

Established: 2012 for a period of 4 – 6 years

Participating funders: Charles H. Revson Foundation, Gandyr Foundation, The Ted Arison Family Foundation, UJA – Federation of New York, National Insurance Institute's Fund for the Development of Services for Children and Youth at Risk, anonymous foundation

Investment size per partner: $200,000 - $450,000 per year; $100,000 minimum investment

Commitment time: 3 years

Geographic reach: Israel

For more information: ronit@gandyr.com

The Opportunity Fund is an independent philanthropic consortium of Israeli and North American partners dedicated to providing young Israeli adults from marginalized populations an opportunity to participate in high-quality national civic service. The fund is guided by the conviction that volunteering is not only a civic obligation but a rite of passage in Israeli society – a means for achieving meaningful employment, higher education, and economic independence.

Achievements to date

- More than doubling the number of slots available for disabled and at-risk civic service participants, from 450 to over 1,000 slots per year. Increasing the number of slots of Arab civic service volunteers from 1,400 to 4,500.
- Establishing a long-term partnership with government to regulate the quality of programs for the target populations.
- For the first time, government takes ownership and mutually funds the enrichment programs associated with the civic service at an average cost of $1,000 per volunteer, further empowering the individual.
- Enriching the field by establishing statutory committees, shared study days, participation of new public players, and development of models.
- Multi-year study in progress to examine programs' effectiveness and long-term economic feasibility.

What are the necessary ingredients for successful funder collaborations?

- Agreement and high degree of clarity regarding the definition of goals, objectives, indicators and procedures.
- Relinquishing egos and putting the mission at the center of our actions.
- Deep commitment to the real needs of each partner.
- Total commitment to transparency, credibility and mutual respect.
- Reaching decisions by consensus.

Collaboration Name: The Disabilities Roundtable

Co-funding structure: Pooled funding and in-kind

Issue area: Disabilities in Israel

Total investment to date: $188,000

Established: 2010 as a learning peer network and developed into a funder collaboration

Participating funders: The Ted Arison Family Foundation, The Ruderman Family Foundation, The Fishman Group

Investment size per partner: $62,600

Commitment time: 1 year, renewable

Geographic reach: Israel

For more information: emily@jfunders.org

Born from the ADVANCE Ruderman Jewish Disabilities Funding Conference, and subsequent peer network in Israel, three strategic funders of disabilities in Israel joined in 2010 with a common agenda to raise awareness and accessibility of people with disabilities in the public space.

After a year-long study of Israel's 20 largest cities and local councils, the Positive Approach Index was published in 2013, which ranked Israel's cities according to outdoor and indoor accessibility, access to municipal services, social inclusion of persons with disabilities, and overall satisfaction. The roundtable's next objective is to engage city and municipality leadership in improving accessibility in their jurisdictions.

Achievements to date

- Excellent media coverage and public discussion on the Positive Approach Index.
- Increased awareness of issues facing people living with disabilities via mass media.
- Getting the attention of municipality heads and placing accessibility on municipal agendas.
- Preliminary discussions with the Union of Local Authorities and Forum of 15 largest cities on how to include awareness, access and service to people with disabilities in their collective agenda.
- Talks with leading non-profit organizations to create nationwide training for municipal accessibility coordinators.

What are the ingredients for successful funder collaborations?

- Agreement on shared values and a basic common denominator.
- Room for multiple opinions at the table.
- Commitment for the long haul.

The Israeli Public Forum for Youth Villages and Boarding Schools for Children at Risk

Co-funding structure: Pooled funding

Issue area: Boarding schools and youth villages in Israel

Total investment to date: $1,280,000

Duration: Since 2012

Lead funder: Avi Naor

Participating funders: Naor Foundation, The Jewish Agency for Israel, The Fellowship Foundation, Rashi Foundation, The Ted Arison Family Foundation, Kiryat Yearim Switzerland Friends Association, Fisher Foundation, Daniel Foundation, Louis Factor, Benny Levin, Einat Reich, Boaz Dotan, Joel Koschitzky, Mrs. Merav Mendelbaum, Carasso Foundation, Mozes Wolfowitz Foundation, Ligad Rot Levi.

Investment size per partner: $30,000

Commitment time: 1 year

Geographic reach: Israel

For more information: www.fkn.org.il

The Public Forum promotes caring environments for children, youth and alumni who reside in residential treatment facilities in Israel. Governed by the participating funders, the Forum itself is a consortium of private funders, foundations, non-profit organizations, representatives of youth villages and boarding school organizations, representatives of the Ministries of Education, Social Affairs and Social Services, field experts and scholars. The Forum's objectives are threefold: influence policy, expand partnerships and resources for youth villages and boarding schools, and strengthen management and professional capabilities.

Achievements to date

- Increased government attention to youth villages and boarding schools, including a day devoted to the issue in the Knesset in January 2014.
- Involvement in Education Minister Shai Piron's decision to promote a five-year, $50 million government program to improve building infrastructures in youth villages.
- The Forum, along with the Fellowship Foundation, has taken the lead in building 10 homes for graduates of the villages who lack family support.
- Development of models to assist the youth villages in creating meaningful partnerships with the business sector, local authorities and surrounding communities.
- The Forum and the JDC Institute for Leadership and Governance are developing a training program to empower civil volunteer involvement at the youth villages.
- Developing a national program for youth village and boarding school graduates who lack family support – the Forum is drafting a national program that will include close, personal support for graduates of youth villages and boarding schools who do not receive support from their families. The goal is to promote their inclusion in the various spheres of life within Israeli society in the best possible way.

What are the ingredients for successful funder collaborations?

- Working together to maximize the impact of the efforts on a national level.
- Finding a balance between the social investment of each individual funder with the Forum's shared goals on the national level.

Collaboration Name: Green Environment Fund

Co-funding structure: Pooled funding

Issue area: Environmental protection in Israel

Total investment to date: $15,000,000

Duration: 2001 - 2014

Lead funders: Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, The Nathan Cummings Foundation

Participating funders: Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, The Nathan Cummings Foundation, The Samuel Sebba Charitable Trust, The Morningstar Foundation, New Israel Fund

Investment size per partner: $150,000 - $350,000 per year

Commitment time: 1 year

Geographic reach: Israel

For more information: www.gef.org.il

Established in 2001, the Green Environment Fund is Israel's most long-lasting funding consortium. It plays a leadership role in the development of Israel's environmental movement, supporting environmental work at the grassroots and regulatory levels, and spearheading the teaching of environmental values within the Israeli school system.

During its existence, nearly 50 percent of all green NGOs in Israel received support from either GEF or the Sheli Fund, which awards small grants to local environmental activism and leadership development activities. Grants are awarded in critical environmental subjects such as water, transportation, public health, open spaces, urban planning, and energy, strengthening the ability of NGOs to influence national policy and encourage public debate. After 13 years of operation, GEF ceased operations in 2014.

Achievements to date

- Developing the first major environmental education program for the Israeli school system, bringing together the Ministries of Environment and Education. The Green Network operates in hundreds of schools, Jewish and Arab, throughout the country.
- By funding active NGOs, the Green Environment Fund played a key role in expanding and deepening the environmental movement in Israel.
- Specific victories of the environmental movements that the Green Environment Fund sponsored include: Saving the hills of Jerusalem, passing the clean-air act, coastal building, removal of fish tanks from the Red Sea, and many others.

What are the necessary ingredients for successful funder collaborations?

- Agreement on vision, goals and decision-making methods.
- Decency and respect accorded to all partners.
- A willingness to listen to new opinions and change direction when needed.

COMMITTED TO GIVE

PROMOTING ISRAELI PHILANTHROPY

Collaboration name: Committed to Give

Co-funding structure: Pooled funding

Issue area: Promoting private philanthropy in Israel

Total investment to date: $500,000

Established: 2012

Participating funders: Itsik Danziger, Ronny Douek, Shuki Ehrlich, Amir Halevy, Meir Heth, Noam Lautman, Yael Lipman, Merav Mandelbaum, Shula Mozes, Avi Naor, Orni Petrushka, Irith Rappaport, Leon Recanati, Shira Ruderman, Yoav Schwalb, Raya Strauss Ben Dror, Eilon Tirosh, Judith Yovel Recanati

Investment size per partner: $25,000

Commitment time: 3 years

Geographic reach: Israel

For more information: www.ctg.org.il

Committed to Give brings together private Israeli donors who collaborate to promote private philanthropy among high net-worth individuals as well as encourage strategic and long-term giving. An initiative of JFN and Sheatufim, CTG stemmed from its partners' collective concern about the low number of active donors relative to the number of persons of wealth in Israel with potential to give. CTG aspires to lead a paradigm shift and change the culture of giving among affluent Israelis.

Achievements to date

- Research and publication of Israel's first-ever quantitative study on Israeli philanthropy – sources, scope of giving, and target areas. Collected by the Central Bureau of Statistics, this resource serves as a benchmark for analyzing and tracking the Israeli philanthropic community.
- Creating a new discourse about meaningful private philanthropy in Israel and the potential role and responsibility of wealthy individuals in Israel's civic society.
- Creating a committed and active group of funders with common visions and goals.

What are the ingredients for successful funder collaborations?

- Develop a group methodology for discourse and decision making.
- Create a sense of ownership and high level of engagement among group members.
- Acknowledge the advantages of group action and collective power.

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To share with us your funder collaboration experience, or to offer feedback, please contact JFN at **jfnisrael@jfunders.org**

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