

## MODULE 6

# Working With Partners



**BDA: ON-BOARDING TRAINING**  
**Participant Guide**

## Module objectives

By the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Understand the importance of partnering.
- Select a good partner.
- Interact using proper etiquette with partners.
- Demonstrate Solar Sister's needs and assets.
- Manage partnerships.
- Expand through partnership networks.
- End partnerships.

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### Facilitator notes

**Duration:** 2 hours and 45 minutes

**Materials:**

Computers or tablets

Partnership Selection Checklist

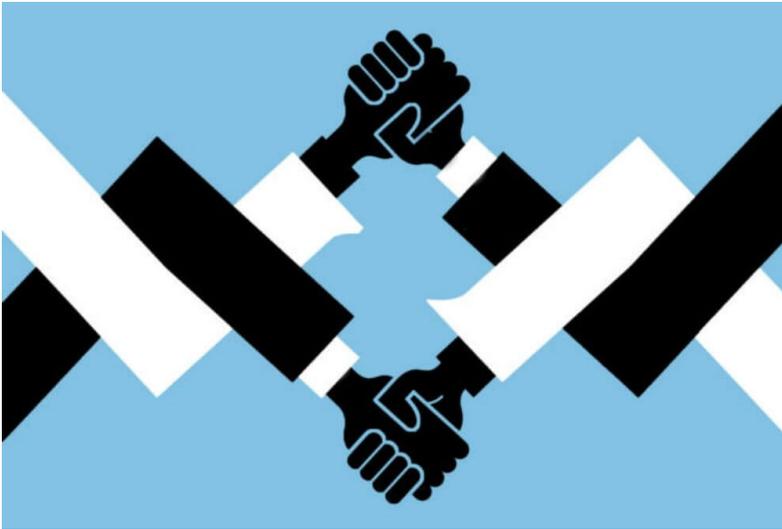
KPI table

## Lessons

- Partnership strategy
- Partnership value exchange
- Partner management

# Partnership Strategy

## Why Partner?



Partnering with other social enterprises, religious groups, NGOs, and community organizations who do similar work and share Solar Sister's values and mission is important for two key reasons.

1. Partnerships contribute to Solar Sister's strategic initiative to "Scale What Works," increasing impact and growing the organization by expanding into new territories.
2. Working with partners will also help you, as a BDA, to achieve your KPIs by facilitating the recruitment process and increasing your recruitment yields.



### Group Discussion

Visit the [Solar Sister website](#) and look at the different "Implementer" partners

What do each of these partner organizations do?

How do you think these partners work with and add value to Solar Sister?

### Facilitator notes

**Duration:** 45 minutes

### Materials:

Computer or tablet so that BDAs can access the Solar Sister website

Copies of the partnership selection checklist

### Additional Notes:

It is important that BDAs clearly understand both the strategy of partnering at the high-level and also why partnering is an effective strategy for them in their day-to-day work.

### Activity: Group Discussion - 15 minutes

Give BDAs 5 minutes to explore the partners on the website and another 10 to discuss as a group.

## What makes a good partner?

You are looking for partners who:

- Share Solar Sister’s mission and values
- Have access to new communities and markets
- Are qualified and committed to forming partnerships

Within each of these categories there are three levels of priority that will help you determine which partners are the best fit. Use the Partnership Selection Checklist tool below to rank the fit of potential partners.

### Facilitator notes

Before BDAs can brainstorm what makes a good partner, they must understand the fundamentals of Solar Sister. It may be necessary to review some of the lessons from previous modules

### Additional Notes:

Walk through the checklist in detail with the BDAs and distribute digital and paper copies that they can keep.

Highest Priority		Poor	Fair	Excellent
The organization must...	Serve the poor and marginalized through community-based initiatives			
	Recognize women as key agents of sustainable development			
	Work with women’s group to expand their economic opportunities			
	Provide financial services or trainings to boost income generating activities			
	Make frequent trips into rural villages			
	Work in communities with a market for solar			
	Work in regions where it is socially acceptable for women to work outside of the home. If not, they must be striving to change the culture through community-based education or sensitivity trainings			
	Maintain a trusting relationship with the community			
	Be flexible and open to adjusting their model to work with Solar Sister			
	Have the resources available to commit, including an employee who can make the partnership with Solar Sister a priority			

Second Priority		Poor	Fair	Excellent
The organization should...	Work in communities with limited grid access			
	Work with community groups to create SACOS or VICOBAS			
	Be excited to share transport into communities with BDAs			
	Have an office space that they can allocate to a BDA			
	Have multiple field offices or a network of other branches/congregations across the country			
Third Priority		Poor	Fair	Excellent
Other assets include...	Work in communities completely off the grid			
	Successfully partnered with social enterprises or NGOs in the past			

 **You need to ask yourself:**

- What is your motivation for working with this potential partner? What is the partner’s motivation for working with Solar Sister?
- Does the potential partner meet the criteria in the Partnership Selection Checklist?
- What makes this partner valuable?

 **Asking the right questions**

To find the right partner, you need to ask the right questions. Take a few minutes to write down 5-10 questions that you will use in an introductory conversation with a potential partner. What important information do you need to find out from the conversation?

**Activity: Asking the Right Questions** - 10 minutes

First give BDAs 5 minutes to journal/brainstorm on their own, then give them another 5 minutes to discuss with each other.

# Partnership Value Exchange

Value exchange is fundamental to partnerships. Both partners must be aware of the mutual benefits and committed to contributing to the partnership. While the partner’s assets and needs will vary, for the most part, the assets and needs of Solar Sister are consistent.

**Facilitator notes**

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Materials:**

Computer or tablet so BDAs can access the Solar Sister website.

**Additional Notes:**

Go through each item in each chart with the BDAs and answer any questions they may have about an asset or need. When talking about assets, it may be helpful to distribute copies of Turning on the Lights and discuss the impact of Solar Sister on communities.

	<b>Social Impact</b>	<b>Community Advantages</b>	<b>Practical Offerings</b>
<b>Solar Sister's Assets</b>	Women’s economic empowerment  Improved educational outcomes for children  Decreased health risks  Holistic community development	Trust networks between SSEs and customers  Positive reputation among beneficiaries	Lights and cookstoves  Purchases under warranty  Entrepreneurship trainings  Operations not dependent on a partner

	<b>New Markets</b>	<b>Belonging &amp; Accountability</b>	<b>Logistical Support</b>
<b>Solar Sister's Needs</b>	Women in need of economic opportunity  Rural communities  Systems that connect women to financial capital  A demand for solar  Culture in which women can work outside of the home	Office space available for a BDA  Colleagues to build camaraderie  Face-to-face interaction	Storage space for inventory  Transportation into the field



### Role Play-Let's Practice!

You have just been introduced to a new partner and have set up an introductory meeting

1. Prepare a 5-6 minute "pitch" explaining:
  - Who you are
  - What Solar Sister does
  - Why you are interested in forming a partnership with their organization
  - Your needs and assets

**Rules for the pitch: Choose a specific asset and a need to focus on. You may want to reference [Solar Sister's impact page](#) or [Turning on the Lights](#) for more specific statistics to discuss as assets.**

2. Spend 2-3 minutes preparing
3. Present your pitch to a partner (recall the "Partner Etiquette" section)
4. Provide each other with some feedback
5. Present your pitch to the whole group

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#### Facilitator notes

**Activity: Role Play** – 20 minutes. Give BDAs time to review Solar Sister's impact.

## Partner etiquette

### How should you approach new partners?

1. Whether you were connected through your leadership team, BDM, or you initiated contact on your own, be respectful and welcoming in your initial outreach to a potential partner. Demonstrate a high level of professionalism and ask to meet with someone from the organization to have a discussion about partnership opportunities.
2. Clarify the value exchange. Using the charts in the following lesson as a resource, clearly explain the benefits and expectations of partnering with Solar Sister.

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### Facilitator notes

This section emphasizes BDA etiquette working with partners. It is important to stress that BDAs are serving as representatives of Solar Sister and it is their responsibility to uphold the reputation of the organization in their interactions.

### How should you interact with current partners?

1. Be respectful of your partners time by planning your weekly or monthly timetables strategically around the partner's timetables. Coordinate travel plans and village visits keeping your partner's schedule and availability in mind.
2. Be assertive in your needs. Request to pitch to the partner's beneficiaries in smaller groups for increased intimacy and personal connection. It is also helpful to present at the beginning of a meeting to ensure audience attention is sharp for your recruitment pitch.



### **Reflect: What do you think are the most important assets and needs?**

What do you think will be the most difficult in approaching new partners? How will you address these difficulties?

How will you act professionally around a partner?

# Partnership Management

Once you have entered into an active relationship, it will require management throughout all stages of its development.

## Consistent communication

Your level of interaction with members of your partner organization will vary from partner to partner and in some cases, you may even share a workspace at your partner's office. Regardless, each week you should:

1. Check in with someone from the partner organization
2. Check-in with your BDA about the partnership

## Keep your BDM informed

In your weekly check-ins with your BDM, you should devote time to share progress and updates on your partnerships. Every month you should review the MOU with your BDM to ensure that it is being upheld.

## KPI tracking

Below are the nine KPIs you should track for every partnership. It is also important to develop additional KPIs for each partner. Be sure that both you and your partner are aware of and are tracking the KPIs.

1. Number of SSEs recruited
2. Number of new villages infiltrated
3. Number of lights sold
4. Number of village meetings attended
5. Number of people exposed to Solar Sister messaging
6. Revenue gained from partnership
7. Length of time in partnership
8. Number of days BDA spends with the partner per month
9. Number of lives improved

### Facilitator notes

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Materials:** Computer or tablet so that BDAs can access the Solar Sister website.

Copies of the KPI table.



### Group Discussion

- Can you think of any KPIs for a religious organization?
- How might you track KPIs with a partner?

## Expansion Through Partnership Networks

If a partnership is successful, it may be beneficial to expand to other locations or offices within the organization. If these offices are within your region this may increase your responsibility and oversight. If they are in another region you will have to connect one of your colleagues to the partner and introduce them to the partner.



### Exercise: Utilizing the partner network

Choose one of the partner organizations that Solar Sister currently works with. Spend 5 minutes researching the partner to find where they work. Do they work in your region? In other regions? Develop a plan for how you would utilize this partner's network and identify which BDAs you will collaborate with.

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#### Facilitator notes

**Activity: Group Discussion** – 10 minutes

**Activity: Utilizing the Partner Network** – 15 minutes

Give BDAs 10 minutes to conduct research on their own, then open the floor up for sharing about what they found.

## Ending Partnerships

There are several reasons why a partnership may need to end. However, ending a partnership should always be a last resort; you should always consider placing it on hold or taking a break first. You should make an effort to work through challenges and problems.

The following circumstances may be reason to terminate a partnership:

1. If the partner organization shifts its mission or focus so that it no longer aligns with Solar Sister's mission and focus.
2. If KPIs for the partnership consistently fail to be met.
3. If the terms and agreements in the MOU are broken.

If a partnership fails under any of these conditions, you should report the assessment to their BDM. The BDM will review all aspects of the partnership and visit the partner in the field to discuss the current situation. If no resolution is found, the BDM will alert the Country Manager who should then draft a term of agreement that ends the partnership.



### **Review: What is your role in forming and maintaining partnerships?**

Why do you think partnerships are important?

How can partnerships make recruitment easier?

What do you think are Solar Sister's most compelling assets? Greatest needs?

What do you think are some of the most important KPIs?

When and why should a partnership end?

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#### **Facilitator notes**

**Activity: Review** – 20 minutes

Have BDAs reflect on the following questions for 10 minutes on their own, then review for 10 minutes as a group.