

Action & Implementation Guide

Turn a shared design into coordinated action.

The Action & Implementation Guide translates the partnership's Theory of Action into a practical Plan–Do–Review cycle. Use it collaboratively to clarify agreements, assign responsibility and decision authority, coordinate communication, identify resources, establish evidence of progress, and determine how the partnership will learn and adapt during implementation.

The guide is intended to make expectations visible across organizations. Because partners may operate under different policies, professional terminology, decision structures, budgets, and timelines, record agreements in language that all parties can understand. Distinguish clearly between what has been discussed, what has been agreed upon, who has authority to make particular decisions, and what conditions or approvals must be satisfied before action occurs.

The completed tables can also provide much of the information needed to develop a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other partnership agreement.

Implementation follows three recurring stages:

PLAN — Establish agreements, roles, decision rights, communication processes, and responsibilities.

DO — Carry out specific actions, braid the financial and in-kind resources needed to support them, and gather evidence connected to the Theory of Action.

REVIEW — Examine results, partnership health, sustainability, and changing conditions to determine whether the work should be renewed, redesigned, expanded, paused, or concluded.

The goal is not simply to determine whether activities occurred. Partners should ask whether the work increased access to meaningful arts learning, maintained quality, strengthened belonging and agency, developed local capacity, and created conditions that can endure beyond a single project or funding cycle.

PREPARE: Partner Agreements

Translate the decisions made during Partnership Design into explicit agreements about how the partnership will operate. Clarify authority, shared assets, information use, communication, conflict resolution, and renewal before implementation begins.

Work Component	Agreement: Use Language That Is Easily Understood Across Sectors. Avoid Jargon. Include Details To Improve Clarity And Specificity.
Convener	
Local Decision Rights	
Regional Decision Rights	
Shared Services/Assets	
Data Ownership & Use	
Public Communication	
Conflict/ Exit Process	
Annual Renewal Process	

PLAN: Decision-making and Communication

Partnerships cross organizational structures, so responsibility and authority may not always reside with the same person. Use this table to identify who is responsible for the work, who has approval authority, whose expertise must be consulted, who needs to remain informed, and how frequently communication should occur.

Decision	Responsible	Approves	Consulted	Informed	Frequency
Program Design					
Instructional Quality					
Student/Family Recruitment & Support					
Budget/ Purchasing					
Data/ Consent					
Public Communication					

DO: Take Action

A partnership is established because no one partner has the capacity to address the challenge in isolation. Every decision is based on a Theory of Action (see Partnership Design): a specific action is intended to make a specific change.

Theory Of Action: If We (Action) Then Students/Educators/Community Will (Desired Outcome) Because (Indicator Of Success).

Break the Theory of Action into specific, observable actions. For each action, identify who will lead the work, the intended change, the evidence that will indicate progress, and the resources required for implementation.

Measurement and Learning Plan

Identify evidence that will help partners learn—not simply report. Measures should help determine who gained access, the quality and intensity of participation, participants' experience of belonging and agency, changes in educator or partner capacity, and whether the partnership is creating more durable conditions for arts learning.

Braiding Resources

Document the full set of resources required to carry out each action, regardless of which partner provides them. Include cash, grants, gifts, in-kind contributions, personnel, facilities, equipment, technology, transportation, and other costs so that the true resource requirements and future obligations of the partnership are visible.

Action And Implementation: Describe The Specific Action Agreed Upon By Partners And Who Is Responsible For Leading The Action.

Asset Mapping

What Would Indicate Our Desired Outcome?	Data Source/ Disaggregate By	Who Reviews?	Frequency?

Braiding Resources

Need/ Cost	Cash/ In-Kind Source	Grant/Gift Source	Recurring? One Time?	Restrictions/ Timing	Contingency

REVIEW: Sustainability

Sustainability does not necessarily mean preserving every activity or expense indefinitely. Review what level of arts learning the partnership was designed to provide, which elements are essential to quality and access, what recurring responsibilities must be embedded in existing systems, and what may appropriately change as local capacity grows.

Was The Learning Intended For Exposure (One Time Encounter), Participation (Several Contacts), Or Sustained Learning (Sequenced Instruction Over Time)?

How Will Recurring Needs Be Embedded/Addressed Once The Project Concludes?

What Can Be Reduced Without Weakening Quality Or Accessibility After The Project?

REVIEW: Partnership Health

A successful project does not automatically indicate a healthy partnership. Periodically examine the quality of the relationship itself, using evidence to discuss shared purpose, trust, reciprocity, clarity, equity, learning quality, distributed leadership, communication, and resilience. Use the review to make an explicit decision to renew, redesign, pause, or conclude the partnership.

Conduct at least once a year, or midpoint of any specific project timeline.

- Rate each statement: 1=not yet true; 2=emerging; 3=usually true; 4=consistently true.
- Discuss evidence of conditions before averaging scores.

Partnership Condition	1	2	3	4	Evidence/Action
Shared purpose is understood across roles					
Roles & decisions are clear					
Trust supports honest conversation					
Benefits & workload are reciprocal					
Student/family perspectives shape decisions					
Access barriers are actively reduced					
Arts learning is high quality					
Expertise circulates across organizations					
Resources & leadership are distributed					
Evidence is used for improvement					
Contributions are visible & celebrated					
The work can survive turnover or funding shifts					
Communication					



Renew, Redesign, Pause Or Conclude? Why?

One Commitment From Each Partner Before The Next Review: