

Checking for the Basics

Russell M. Linden's *Working Across Boundaries* is a wonderful resource for those thinking about collaboration in and among governments and nonprofit organizations. Chapter 5, "Getting the Basics Right", reminds those thinking about collaborations to check for the basics by asking yourselves these questions:

Have you:

- Discussed the parties' interests and goals regarding the collaborative?
- Agreed that there is a compelling, shared interest that the parties want to pursue, now?
- Felt comfortable asking questions and discussing doubts and concerns?
- Got people at the table to who can speak for all of the stakeholder organizations?
- Considered forming a smaller core group to take on certain leadership and management tasks?
- Spent time in the early phases getting to know one another?
- Periodically asked if the process is clear, and if the parties are comfortable with it?
- Established a few simple ground rules?
- Identified and supported those who will function as champions for the effort?

"The basics provide an excellent foundation for collaborative work. These factors don't ensure success, however. They simply provide the setting in which interested parties are most likely to achieve their goals through joint effort" (p. 90).

Linden, Russell M. (2002). *Working across boundaries: Making collaboration work in government and nonprofit organizations*. San-Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.