**Principles and Processes for Harvard’s Climate Education Partnerships**

Contributors: Gaurab Basu, Catherine Claypoole,Janet Gyatso, Erin Driver-Linn, Rebecca Nesson, Laura Schifter, Hannah Teicher, and Dustin Tingley

| **Overview and Introduction** |
| --- |

**Why are climate education partnerships important?**

Climate problems are inherently interconnected, crossing sectors, countries, societal roles, organizations, and institutional roles. For Harvard to educate our students effectively about climate problems, solutions, and actions, we need to collaborate across silos and think differently about the assumed boundaries of our institution and the rest of the world.

**How do we define climate education partnerships in the Harvard context?**

*A collaborative relationship between or among organizations outside or within Harvard with aligned interests and a common vision that addresses climate concerns and educational goals.*

Aligned interests: All partners are expected to gain value from their involvement, engage with each other, and have stated shared interests and goals for the climate and education partnership.

Outside or within Harvard: Partnerships within Harvard that cross organizational boundaries are important, though may be differently construed than those between entities within Harvard and outside the institution. Both are important areas of collaboration and partnership.

Educational goals: Education objectives and activities may be broadly defined. For example, while we may emphasize educational activities that are for-credit and within courses, climate education partnerships may also include student organizations working within the community.

**What kinds of climate education partnerships do we envision?**

* Partnerships that address tangible, practical projects
* Partnerships with local communities
* Partnerships that cross regional or national boundaries
* Partnerships focused on behavioral change (whether narrowly defined or toward scaling)
* Partnerships focused on policy changes
* Partnerships that may require risk assessment and review/approval
* Partnerships for student projects or with individual courses
* Partnerships with schools, centers, student organizations

Partnerships exist along a spectrum of commitment, which represents time, effort, engagement, and complexity.

|  | Illustration of the range of possible climate-education partnerships |
| --- | --- |
|  | Light commitment |  | Medium commitment |  | Deep commitment |
| Example of kinds of partnership | Guest instructor in a course | Students take field trips each iteration of the class that requires active participation of the organization being visited  | Student organization at Harvard enters into a consortium with other student organizations across the country | Partnership with a small non-profit in another country for a project-based course  | School partners with another higher education institution for a range of climate/education activities |
| Specific example | An instructor invites someone from the UN to a Q&A session with students about the Sustainable Development Goals | Course on Energy at HBS brings students to Harvard’s two main power production facilities | A climate-focused student organization develops a consortium with other student orgs with an annual co-sponsored event and manages a competition for student grants | Students work on projects that could be implemented as solutions addressing flood plain concerns in Puerto Rico | HMS partners with an HBCU on developing joint curricula, funded by a foundation |
| Process implications |  | Inform Salata | Consult with Salata | Consult with Salata | Consult with Salata |

| **Guiding Principles** |
| --- |

Good, effective climate education partnerships will deepen student learning, result in mutual benefit, and ideally positively impact the climate. Principles for initiating, evaluating, and improving partnerships include, though are not limited to, the following:

* **Partnerships have explicitly defined climate and education goals**.
	+ There are learning objectives.
	+ There are climate objectives.
	+ These include defining the imperative to partner.
* **Partnerships are mutually beneficial**.
	+ They are not considered “service.”
	+ Harvard partners enter into partnerships with humility.
	+ All parties believe in the value of the partnership and commit to engage.
* **Partnerships create value**.
	+ There is expected value to – and a solutions orientation toward – the climate education activities undertaken through partnerships.
	+ Upfront work should outline why the partnership is necessary, why it can’t it be done within a class, dept, discipline, school and merits the partnership.
	+ Partnerships should clearly define what climate problem is the focus of the partnership and how the partnership moves toward addressing it.

| **Suggested Processes** |
| --- |

Harvard instructors, students, and administrators working to develop and nurture climate education partnerships will benefit from following self-driven processes like those below, and engaging with other decision-making bodies when prudent or necessary.

1. **Stakeholder analysis**. Different partners will have different priorities, characteristics, and values, and bring different competencies, perspectives, and aspirations to a partnership. For example, governmental bodies – domestic or international, city, state, federal, of different branches – will vary from business partners, non-profits, community organizations, foundations, philanthropic organizations, media and press organizations, tribes, trades unions, or other academic institutions. Thinking through and defining stakeholder goals, needs, and ways of engaging from the beginning will help to adhere to the principles above. A stakeholder analysis might include addressing questions like the following:
	1. What do stakeholders want from the partnership?
	2. What do they bring to the partnership?
	3. How is investment and risk shared?
	4. What are expectations for communications and deliverables?
2. **Scope the partnership**. Stakeholders together develop a map of the partnership. This might include (1) an explicit statement of the alignment of interests, overarching vision, and common purpose; (2) a set of objectives and activities toward those objectives; (3) a project plan with an outline of required resources, roles and responsibilities, and timelines. For some partnerships it may be of benefit to develop and sign a partnership agreement.
3. **Manage and evaluate the partnership**. A well-maintained partnership cultivates a positive culture and involves constant review and iteration – monitoring progress toward goals, strong communication, and with mechanisms to collaboratively evaluate what is working and problem-solve when something isn’t working. Characteristics of strong partnerships include:
	1. Trust and transparency. Partners are trusted when they are seen as capable, reliable, acting in the best interests of the partnership. Partners engage with one another effectively when they are open about their motivations, communicative, and honest.
	2. Awareness of power differences and an equitable approach to the partnership. Power imbalances, unaddressed, can result in poor decision-making, reduced commitment, or failure of the partnership. Power imbalances can be countered by full and open discussion including about resources. Partners are unlikely to bring perfectly equivalent statuses or resources to the partnership, so problematic power imbalance can be a matter of subjective experience: Does one party feel unable to communicate openly or walk away, disrespected, without voice?
	3. Accountability and commitment. Partners are accountable to each other to deliver on their commitments and are committed to the partnership.
	4. Continue to ensure mutual benefit to the partnership. Partners monitor and reflect on joint understanding of what, specifically, will be gained for each party, and how it is working.

**When should you seek guidance and/or approval before establishing a climate education partnership?**

Some climate education partnerships that are valuable in terms of the principles above will involve complexity and risk -- for example, those made between Harvard and an entity within a country that is politically unstable, or with a fossil fuel organization or those involving sharing private data or generating intellectual property. No individual faculty member or set of students wants to be in a position of having to manage such a partnership without support, and Harvard as an institution has an obligation and moral imperative to evaluate the upsides and downsides of such partnerships. Parties need to seek guidance or approval if:

* There are legal implications to the partnership
* The partnership requires significant resources
* There are potential conflicts of interest
* There is a hot-button political concern related to the partnership

In these instances, Harvard climate education partners should consult with the leadership of their schools and/or the Salata Institute and may be asked to formally propose the partnership.

| **CLIMATE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST** **(For medium to deep commitment partnerships)** |
| --- |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Alignment** |  |  |  |
| Partners have committed to a shared vision and shared objectives that include (a) learning objectives and (b) climate objectives. |  |  |  |
| Partners have identified collaborative advantages. |  |  |  |
| All partners agree the partnership is value to them. |  |  |  |
| **Risk assessment** |  |  |  |
| If there are legal complexities, significant resources, potential conflicts of interest, or potential hot-button political concerns, Harvard entities involved in the partnership have consulted with and sought and received approval from their School leadership and the Salata Institute. |  |  |  |
| **Relationships** |  |  |  |
| There is collective leadership of the partnership. |  |  |  |
| Partners are transparent about their motivations, assumptions, and goals. |  |  |  |
| Partners trust each other. |  |  |  |
| Partners are open about power differences and are empowered to communicate candidly and address concerns related to decision-making. |  |  |  |
| Partners are accountable to each other to deliver on their commitments. |  |  |  |
| Challenges, problems, and tensions are dealt with respectfully and collectively. |  |  |  |
| **Structure** |  |  |  |
| There is a partnering agreement and/or documentation of objectives that is committed to by all partners. |  |  |  |
| There is a clear scope of the partnership, with agreed upon deliverables and timelines. |  |  |  |
| The scope of the partnership includes a shared understanding of how decisions will be made and how required resources will be provided. |  |  |  |
| **Shared management of partnership** |  |  |  |
| There are explicitly defined roles and responsibilities for all entities working in the partnership. |  |  |  |
| Project management is approached iteratively, with a focus on the shared goals, and involving communication and contribution from both parties. |  |  |  |
| Communication is sufficiently frequent and open. |  |  |  |
| Deliverables and timeframes are clear. |  |  |  |
| Meetings happen with appropriate frequency and agendas and meeting logistics ensure inclusivity of all partners. |  |  |  |
| Decisions are made in a timely, efficient, and inclusive way. |  |  |  |
| The partnership adjusts based on experiences to date. |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

Relevant Links and Resources:

[United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Partnership Guide](https://www.thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SDG-Partnership-Guidebook-1.0.pdf)

The Partnering Initiative (TPI)

[How cross-sector collaboration is driving the global climate agenda](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/01/how-cross-sector-collaboration-is-driving-the-global-climate-agenda/)

World Economic Forum

[Six rules for happy climate partnerships](https://www.c2es.org/2015/02/6-rules-for-happy-climate-partnerships/)

The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions

[The Collaboration Imperative](https://hbr.org/2014/04/the-collaboration-imperative-2)

 Harvard Business Review