

Outward Bound Community Partnerships

Practical Advice to Partners on:

1. Activating the Partnership Agreement
2. Selection of participants

The following information is offered as advice only, in response to specific questions raised by both Principals and Project Officers of partners to Outward Bound (OB) and in the interests of consistency in policy and practice for both parties.

Partnership Agreement

After years of informal arrangements, the formal Outward Bound Partnership Agreement, though based on a generic format, has been carefully designed so as to require minimal, if any, changes.

Your final Partnership Agreement is structured specifically for your region, community or organisation, taking into account any individual issues that are jointly discussed and agreed as essential inclusions or alterations.

The format is simple, inclusive and easy to follow. It clearly sets out roles and responsibilities together with a *desirable* timeline. Simply, who does what and when!

The timeline is advantageous for you, to ensure your needs are met and preferred Course places reserved. Outward Bound benefits from a structured and consistent timeline, to enable essential forward planning for properly selected, appropriately briefed and fully prepared participants, eager to make a positive change in their lives.

The Agreement, though specific, is not inflexible, particularly regarding the preferred timing of roles. OB recognises that there will be instances when circumstances require the timeline to be drastically reduced. *The degree of flexibility will emerge totally from joint cooperation in each individual case. Consider nothing as impossible until fully discussed and don't hesitate to use your nominated contacts!*

Keep the Agreements relevant and current. Notify any changes to contact names and details as they occur. Ensure full disclosure in any internal handover and make early introduction of your OB counterpart a priority.

Any problems? Communicate! Contacts should be able to iron out much of the procedural matters without concerning Boards and Management, who should however, at all times be kept informed of progress.

Selection of Participants

If your Partnership Agreement relates to supporting and financially assisting young people to attend an Outward Bound Course, remember: *EVERY teenager will benefit from the opportunity to participate in the unique experience of Outward Bound!* Not every teenager's family however, will have the means to meet the financial commitment needed to provide that opportunity. This should be your target group.

If your organisation or community is a newly established Outward Bound partner, there is no need to re-invent the wheel. Models exist that will provide guidance. For instance, Lions Clubs should contact long-term established OB partners (eg Nowra, Gerringong) to examine their successful strategies. Rotary may wish to touch base with their Holbrook compatriots who have a long association with Outward Bound. Country Education Foundation of Australia communities should discuss methods with long-termers Booroowa, Harden-Murrumburrah, Yass or Cowra. And of course, all are welcome to discuss and adapt the *Australian Outward Bound Development Fund (AOBDF)* model as a guide.

By way of background, the AOBDF was established under its own Constitution to allow donations to be accepted and funds distributed, aimed specifically at assisting people who are disabled or disadvantaged, socially or financially, to access Outward Bound courses and thus alleviate the circumstances of their disadvantage. Strict compliance with the terms of this Constitution is required in order to protect the significant taxation advantages offered to donors, which are in many instances, essential to the major philanthropic Trusts and Foundations.

Outward Bound has, accordingly, in the interests of uniformity and consistency, prepared a formal *Application for Financial Assistance*, which must be completed by the prospective participant and supported in terms of the conditions of eligibility, by an independent adult.

Criteria for Selection is included in the Application Form *to act as a general guide* in deciding if the applicant falls within the definition of "disabled, or socially or financially disadvantaged". *It must be stressed that the listed criteria is a guide only and is in no way inclusive.* This is an essential factor should you choose to produce your own set of guidelines, which should always include a 'catch-all' clause that allows for circumstances not covered in the categories specifically listed (see Criteria 7).

You will maximise the benefits of your partnership with Outward Bound and best serve the interests of your community if you:

1. **Identify those within the target group who will *most benefit from the experience*, as opposed to the most needy.** Remember, the essential ingredients include the desire to 'have a go' and a genuine commitment to accept the basic challenges: to commit and turn up on the day, to do their best, and to stay for the duration of the course.
2. **Involve the community in the selection process, those who know them best!** Experience has clearly established this as by far the preferable method, one that initiates the enhancement of self-esteem in the young person selected, by a powerful demonstration of genuine community interest and support.
3. **Consider the likelihood of each participant providing a positive role model on their return, especially to the more needy and unsure among his or her peers.** Thoughtful selection will often be repaid by the emergence of highly influential young advocates for the Project, the community and the organisations involved, often from the most unexpected quarters.
4. **Provide the funds and assistance in each instance as set out in the Partnership Agreement.** Your aim should be to establish the opportunity to participate in an Outward Bound course as a highly valued individual advantage, eagerly sought after by both teenagers and their families.
5. **Include a requirement for selected participants to make a *personal* contribution to the course fee, however small, or take an active part in fundraising.** This gives value to the gift, takes away the concept of charity, gives the participant a sense of ownership and commitment, and initiates the quality of social responsibility.
6. **Encourage local clubs, corporations, business interests and private individuals to contribute and become involved,** in recognition of Outward Bound as a means of addressing the national malaise of youth apathy: *building a stronger community by inspiring the new generation.*

7. **Encourage participants on their return to share their experience with others**, publicly thank sponsors and to proudly include their Outward Bound certificates in their portfolio of personal achievements when seeking employment or advancement. Confused young people who lack motivation need essential community support, both pre-course to commit and actually attend, and post-course to maximise the successful transfer of Outward Bound concepts into their everyday lives.
8. **Encourage the more affluent parents, grandparents and other members of extended families in your community to send their teenagers to Outward Bound**, and to consider the financial outlay not as simply an educational expenditure, but as a genuine *investment* in their future and the future of the community.

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