

PRESS INFORMATION

For Immediate Release

25th September 2018

Mind the Gap

Charities, community groups and businesses are speaking different languages, according to research.

There is a mis-match between the expectations of charities and community groups and the support that businesses provide them. This is one of the main findings of an extensive stakeholder engagement exercise undertaken across the charitable and business sectors. The research, involving SMEs, corporates, local community groups and national charities, found that that 91% of the organisations questioned agreed that working with communities can benefit the employees of a business as well as community volunteers, in developing new skills and experience. However, when asked whether businesses understood what charities and community groups need, over two thirds said they don't.

This mismatch between what community groups need and what businesses are providing, by way of support, funding and volunteering, is now being addressed by a newly-formed Community Interest Company, Partnership of Equals. The brainchild of Graham Sprigg, who's sustainability consultancy undertook the original research on behalf of a major client, the CIC aims to bridge the gap in communication and understanding.

"What really struck me during the workshops and interviews was the genuine desire on the part of businesses to be helpful and supportive. Unfortunately, the areas where a business can really make the most difference are frequently missed. Companies want to donate money and volunteers, but often there is a more thoughtful solution that ultimately gives everyone more benefit." Explains Mr Sprigg

The findings from the research, which involved over 270 people and included in-depth interviews and round-table workshops, have provided Partnership of Equals CIC with the information they needed to build a model for developing a successful business-community engagement programme, approached from the business perspective.

The research suggests that support is often haphazard and not thought through, in terms of what a business expects from the partnership and what a community actually needs. There is often very little dialogue between the parties, measurement of outcomes is weak and as a result the potential benefits often remain unrealised.

Copies of the research report are available from Partnership of Equals CIC by emailing letsdothis@pofe.org.uk

End 333 words

Note for Editors

Partnership of Equals is a Community Interest Company and a certified social enterprise. It exists to help businesses invest their time, skills and money in community projects and charitable causes to provide more effective outcomes. Partnership of Equals also provides brokering services to assist in matching businesses and community projects to maximise benefits for both parties.

For more information contact:

Graham Sprigg 07785 921717 email: letsdothis@pofe.org.uk

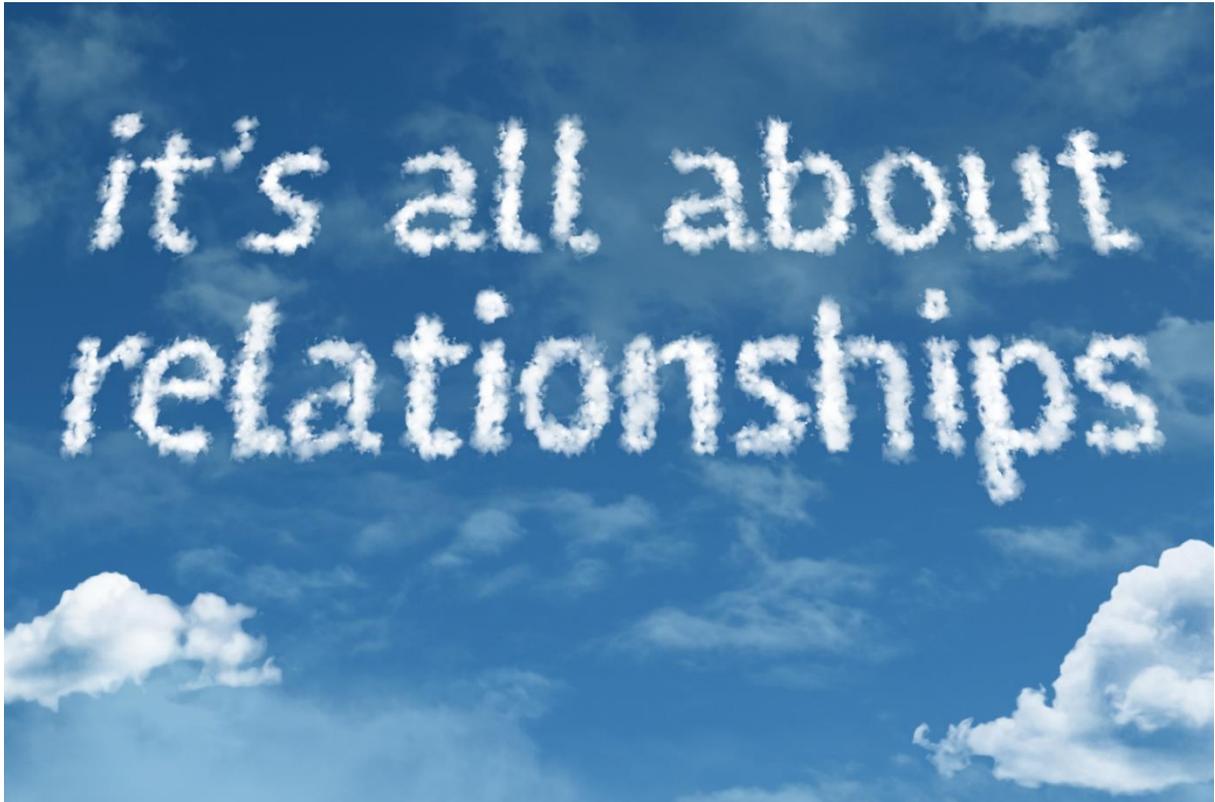


Photo file available on request