

Description

In recent times, science and research have become increasingly globalized endeavors that take place across institutions, industries, and borders. Knowing how to build and maintain a successful international collaboration is a key skill in today's globalized world. International collaborations help promote innovation by bringing together a unique mix of talent, culture, and scientific knowledge. For researchers in the developing world, it can be an opportunity for career growth. In addition, it also provides them access to resources and knowledge that may not be locally available. Today, we are going to look at five ways to help you and your teams build and maintain effective international collaborations.

Lay a Strong Foundation for Collaboration

Before you start a collaboration, here are three ways to lay a strong foundation to ensure the greatest chance of success.

- **Set clear goals and expectations for both the project and each contributor**

Before you start considering potential collaborators, know what you aim to achieve through your project. What do you need your partners to bring to the table to make the collaboration successful? Begin the process with a clear vision and criteria for the type of partner you are looking for. What strengths (knowledge, facilities, equipment) do you have? What are some qualities you need your partner to possess in order to make your project successful?

- **Find a Suitable Partner**

This might seem obvious, however, it is critical that you find a partner with whom you can establish clear communication and a shared vision. If you don't already have someone in mind then conferences, seminars, and existing networks are all good places to start your search. Take a close look at any potential partner's history of collaboration, academic interests and expertise, strategies, and mission. When you find someone, have a thorough discussion about the expectations for the

Copyright: Enago Academy under the CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

project, how responsibilities will be shared, and channels and frequency of communication.

- ### Meet in Person if You Can

While technology allows for purely online collaborations, the value of establishing personal relationships with your international partners cannot be underestimated. Meeting your partner in person even once will facilitate better remote communication as you get to know each other and establish confidence in your relationship. If your budget doesn't allow for an in-person meeting, consider making time for regular video chats.

Keep the Collaboration Alive and Thriving

While it's true that starting might only mean half the battle won, an international collaboration, just like any relationship, will only remain strong if nourished. Once you have launched your project, keep these two tips in mind for ongoing success.

- ### Be Flexible

Successful international collaborations require an exceptional degree of communication and some cultural knowledge. But no matter how much preparation you do, the odds of a misunderstanding arising at some point are high. It is important to understand that one must act in good faith and have a higher general awareness of the cultural factors at play. This is true even when collaborating among cultures assumed to be similar, such as South Korea and Japan. Remaining flexible and being prepared ahead of time for miscommunications, differences in understanding, and potential pitfalls will help resolve issues as they arise.

- ### Remember the Importance of Give and Take

Even if you are the initiator of the project, keep in mind your collaboration is a project between equals. Remember that everyone gets busy, and recognize that there may be times you feel you are taking on more of the work. Respect the pressures that your partner is experiencing and offer support and help as needed. Ask what you can do to help them out. Always remember to communicate the above with good clarity (and make sure you do this in a timely manner).

Have you ever collaborated with other international researchers? Do you have any other tips? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

Category

1. Career Corner
2. PhDs & Postdocs

Date Created

Copyright: Enago Academy under the CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

2018/09/25
Author
eneditor

Copyright: Enago Academy under the CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 license