

Exercise for Chapter 11 Partnership Model Assessment

If you are interested in pursuing the Partnership Model with a MFI in the area of your target community, you should examine the capacity of both the local church (or organization) and the MFI to engage in an effective partnership. Prayerfully work through the following questions, asking the Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom.

This is a very important moment to apply the **Integral Mission Principal**: *The global body must function in such a way that the local church is able to use its gifts to engage in integral mission: proclaiming and demonstrating among people who are poor the good news of the kingdom of God in a contextually appropriate way.* This means that the local church (or organization) in the Global South should be the ones asking these questions of themselves and of the MFIs in their context. This church understands the local culture better than outsiders, and it is the local church that is engaging in this partnership with the MFI. The role of the outsiders is a supportive rather than a frontline role: providing encouragement, prayer, technical assistance, and appropriate input when asked.

The questions below assume that the partnership is between a church in the Global South and a MFI. If the partnership is between missionary or an organization and a MFI, you can adjust the questions as appropriate.

1. What is your vision for outreach in the community?
2. Think about any previous partnerships your church has had. What do these previous partnerships say about your church's vision for outreach? Do you mostly want to grow your church, or are you also interested in helping the community as a whole to look more like God wants it to look?
3. How have any existing partnerships been beneficial to the church, and what made them beneficial?

4. What obstacles did the church face that would have to be overcome for a partnership with a MFI to be effective?
5. What lessons has the church learned from previous partnerships about how to make the partnership a success?
6. What assets or gifts do you think you could bring to a partnership with a MFI?
7. What MFIs operate in the area of your church's ministry?
8. What do the church leaders and members think about the MFIs operating in the community? Do they see them as "just businesses" that have no kingdom value? As too inflexible? Or as valuable kingdom assets?
9. What are some of the other barriers that could discourage your church from partnering with a MFI? Please brainstorm how these barriers can be overcome.
10. The leaders of your church should now talk with people in any local MFIs to learn if any of them have ever partnered in any way with a church or other faith-based organization. What are their perceptions of the benefits, obstacles, and other issues they have faced?
11. Ask the MFIs about any fears they might have about partnering with you.
12. Ask the MFIs what obstacles they are facing? Could your church help them overcome any of these obstacles?

13. Do the MFIs see any gifts or assets that your church could provide in a partnership?
14. Would the MFI be at all interested in your providing evangelism, discipleship, or counseling services to either the staff or microfinance group members?
15. Would the MFI be at all interested in your providing training to complement the MFIs' financial services? For example, consider the Chalmers Center's curricula on business, home, and health that are described in Ministry Component #4 in Chapter 7. These curricula can be downloaded from the website associated with this book.
16. Ask the MFIs about their vision, mission, and target group. Do any of them seem like a good match for a partnership with your church?
17. Ask people in the community and the target population what they think about these MFIs. Are the MFIs perceived as trustworthy and credible?
18. What assets does your church bring to a potential partnership that could be a win-win for both your church and the MFI?
19. What assets does the MFI bring to a potential partnership that could be a win-win for both your church and the MFI?
20. What fears would you have about partnering with one of these MFIs?
21. Stop and pray that God will give you wisdom as you try to discern the best course of action.

22. If you believe that God is calling you to pursue a partnership with a MFI, the Chalmers Center's *Handbook for Partnering with Microfinance Institutions*, which is available on the website associated with this book, can walk you through this process.