The majority of my work is created collaboratively. However, each of my projects has had a slightly different collaborative model: community-centered collaboration, playwright-centered, physically devised, design-centered collaboration etc... It can be difficult to ensure that all artists and community stake-holders are on the same page financially, artistically, and understand their responsibilities in these diverse models. I decided to create a template that matched the fluidity of the collaborations. Because there is no one way to collaborate, there is no way to create a “How to” guide book, rather I made a series of questions and reminders to use when approaching different situations. It is not all-inclusive, but it is based off of situations I have encountered thus far in my work.

Artist to Artist Contracts:

1. What is the artistic breakdown?
   a. What is the collaborative structure? *This is only a basic list, the important thing is that the collaborators are clear about who is responsible for what in the processes. What is “crossing the line” into someone else’s territory? What are areas where everyone pitches in?*
      i. Literary Collaboration structures:
         1. Collaborators develop the storyline, characters, and write play together.
         2. Collaborators develop a storyline and characters, playwright writes the play.
         3. Collaborators agree on source-material & inspiration (perhaps do interviews together), playwright develops storyline and writes play.
      ii. Physical Devising Structures:
         1. Actors and director physically develop scenarios, playwright writes scenes based off of work in rehearsal hall
         2. Actors and director physically develop scenes, record them and edit them into a show.
      iii. Are collaborators allowed to make changes to a script in the process or do changes have to go through a playwright?
      iv. Once a show is opened, are changes allowed to be made? By whom?

2. If a playwright is brought in, does the playwright retain all the rights to a project once it has been created?
   a. Are agents going to be involved or is it an artist to artist contract?
      i. If it agents are involved remember that they are there to serve the best interests of their client, not necessarily the project. So be clear with yourself or your company before entering negotiations about what are your ideal terms
and what terms you feel would damage the project. (You’ll probably end up somewhere in between the two).

ii. However, since agents are there to serve their clients, remember the client (playwright, director, actor) ultimately has the power to decide the terms of the contract so be clear with your collaborators about why you’re asking for what you’re asking.

3. What rights do the collaborators retain?
   a. How will their work be credited in future productions?
      i. Listed as co-creators?
      ii. Receive royalties?
      iii. Right of first refusal as a director or performer?

4. What rights does the company retain? (if different entity than collaborators)
   a. Rights to the first performance?
   b. Touring rights?
   c. Credit in future performances?

5. Compensation
   a. Flat commission?
   b. Percentage of box office?
   c. Hourly fee?
      i. During development?
      ii. During rehearsals?
   d. Comp Tickets (how many per/ performance)?
   e. Travel compensation?
      i. Housing?
      ii. Per Diem?
      iii. Mileage or Airline reimbursement?

Community Relationship:

How do you manage expectations of the community?

1. How do you maintain a transparent process?
   a. Why you are creating the piece, what is your motivation as an artist?
   b. How will their interviews or input be used?
      i. Will their words be quoted directly in the script? If so, you should look into release forms.
      ii. If you are doing audio or video recording be clear whether it will just be used internally or if it will be shared publicly (for promotional videos, or posted online...sending to foundations for final reports is usually considered a private use, but be clear with interviewee if that is how it will be used). If it will be shared publicly you will need the interviewees to sign a release form.
   c. How the play will be developed? What community feedback will be built in?
      i. Will there be public readings?
         1. Who will be invited?
2. How will the readings be marketed?
3. Will a community partner host it?
   ii. Have you set up a smaller advisory committee that will read the play and give feedback?
   iii. Rough timeline of when the final performance will be.
4. How will community members be involved in the final performance?
   1. Talk-back panel
   2. Community event (bbq, carnival etc...)
   3. Community artists’ works incorporated?
   4. Community members performing/building/running show?
   5. Helping market the show and sell tickets?
      a. Are you asking them to organize and bring a group?
      b. Will community members have to buy tickets? Discounts? Comps?
   d. Be careful not to promise groups something that the project will not be!
      i. Don’t talk your way into an interview or support from a community group by promising that the play will align with their agenda.
         1. If there is overlap between your motivation for creating the project and a community groups’ mission a partnership is wonderful, but stay in communication and be clear that you aren’t creating a propaganda piece for them (unless, of course, that is your purpose).
2. What should they expect from the final artistic product?
   a. How close will this show be to current artistic offerings in the community?
      i. Are there any professional theatre companies in the area? Does the community regularly attend those performances if there is? Why or why not?
      ii. Is there a community theatre in the area? What kind of stories do they usually tell?
      iii. Has there even been a play written about or with the community? If so, how long ago? Was it professionally created? What themes did it look at? (for example, in my hometown there is a group of people who do comedic melodramas about the area. But there has never been a professional theatre in the county. When I speak of the play, people often reference the melodramas because that is their frame of reference. I have developed a way of speaking about the play that separates it from the melodrama. However, I’m careful not to appear dismissive or “above” the melodramas.)
   b. Is the project designed to be by the community or for the community?
      i. Is it created by amateur community members? Performed, designed, directed etc...?
         1. If so, how imbedded are the participants in the community?
         2. Will their participation be controversial? Will it be expected? What are their motivations for participating?
      ii. Is it created by professionals? Are they members of the community or outsiders?
1. *(I have found a combination of professional community members and professional outsiders to be the most fruitful if possible.)*

2. If all artists are outsiders:
   a. Has the community invited you to create a piece?
      i. If not, what connection do you have to the community?
      ii. Are there groups in the community who support the creation of this work?
   b. What checks and balances are in place to ensure you’re not taking advantage of a community?
      i. Don’t assume they automatically want their stories “captured” by artists.
   c. You cannot nor should you try to please everyone.
      i. Even if all outreach is done diligently, it does not mean that everyone in the community will support the creation of the work nor be thrilled by it when it is completed.
      ii. DO NOT MISTAKE A COMMUNITY FOR A HIVE. A community is made up of individuals with varied backgrounds and opinions. Do not assume that because one group supports the project that they all will.
         1. Efforts should be made to include all groups within a community.
            Assuming that because you’ve made contact with one sub-section that they represent the whole is dangerous.
         2. However, even if you have involved or informed as many subsets of the community as possible, that does not guarantee that the final production will be what they were imagining.
      iii. Certain sub-sections of a community might not want the opinions of another sub-section of the community to be expressed.
         1. *For example, a water and wildlife biologist was wary about connecting us to radical environmentalists, because she was worried that they already get too much attention in the media.*
         2. You have to decide whether you want to include more extreme, fringe and radical members/ opinions within the community, and how their opinions are used or framed. Including those viewpoints might alienate certain community members. On the other hand, it might be what is needed to spark conversation or contextualize what is happening in a community.