PARTNERSHIP MATTERS
CURRENT ISSUES IN CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

ISSUE 4: 2006
SPECIAL EDITION for
THE PARTNERING EVENT
CAMBRIDGE, UK
SEPTEMBER 24-26, 2006
PARTNERSHIP MATTERS 4

CURRENT ISSUES IN CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

SPECIAL EDITION

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DESIGN
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PRINTER
Folium Ltd

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Published on behalf of The Partnering Initiative by:
The International Business Leaders Forum
15-16 Cornwall Terrace
Regent’s Park
London NW1 4QP
United Kingdom

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Introduction

Eva Halper and Ros Tennyson

We welcome readers to a new and special edition of Partnership Matters. This year the journal, number four in the series, has been published to coincide with The Partnering Event, an international gathering of alumni from two ground breaking partnership programmes; the Postgraduate Certificate in Cross-sector Partnership (PCCP) and the Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme (PBAS) together with a number of others connected to the work of The Partnering Initiative.

To date, some 350 remarkable partnership practitioners have participated in either PCCP or PBAS and some have completed both. They represent a wide range of organisations and work in many different kinds of partnerships in all parts of the world. We use the word ‘remarkable’ advisedly: some graduates are grappling on a day-to-day basis with current or post-conflict situations (in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Palestine, Rwanda or the Sudan) many others have sole responsibility, often within large and complex organisations, for setting up and managing collaborative ventures with non-traditional partners and all, without exception, are courageous pioneers of a sustainable development paradigm that is being critically scrutinised even though it is still in its infancy.

Despite such critique, partnership has become a much more widely accepted approach for addressing development issues. In their efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, most bi-lateral and international agencies now have units dedicated to the promotion and facilitation of partnerships.

Increasing numbers of international and national corporations include partnering as a core element in their day-to-day operations and value chains.

Government institutions at regional, national and local levels incorporate partnerships in their strategic plans while many NGOs and other civil society groups actively seek corporate and other non-traditional partners to achieve their missions.

For those of us who have been engaged in the promotion and development of cross-sector partnerships for many years, these are exciting times.

Following the lead of PCCP and PBAS, the number of training opportunities and courses in partnering knowledge and skills is increasing, especially at regional and national levels. Partnership issues more frequently feature in the research portfolios of academic institutions, specialist intermediary organisations and policy bodies.

The development of more in-depth partnering case studies and practical tools that can be used at different stages of the ‘partnering cycle’ all provide invaluable support for partnership activities. Advances of this kind are important since they assist a greater ability to understand what works, and what does not, at different levels and in different contexts.

Promoting rigour in partnering practice is increasingly necessary as partnerships come of age.

We believe that The Partnering Initiative plays a central, unique and useful role in this process.

Established in January 2004 by the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) and The University of Cambridge Programme for Industry (CPI) as a not-for-profit programme, the focus of The Partnering Initiative is on developing the ‘art and science’ of cross-sector partnerships for sustainable development. We are fortunate to have had the full endorsement and engagement of our two founding organisations in the critical early stages of development and, later, in managing a seamless transition into The Partnering Initiative becoming a global programme under the umbrella of the IBLF in January.
2006. The Initiative continues to benefit from the active engagement and financial support of three international corporations: Nike, Rio Tinto and Royal Dutch Shell. Without this, and the individual commitment of Maria Bobenrieth, John Hall and Alan Detheridge, respectively, it is entirely possible that The Partnering Initiative would never have got started and the partnership movement would have been deprived of an important champion.

But it did get started and the rapid expansion of our portfolio of activities now requires us to collaborate with a growing group of external colleagues from around the globe, of whom five; Sehr Hussain-Khaliq, Sue McManus, Melanie Rein, Darian Stibbe and Leda Stott, deserve a special mention. Sasha Hurrell, another key player in the team, has provided invaluable research support to the Initiative from the beginning and, more recently, leadership in the highly successful case study project. Others who have contributed significantly and to whom we extend our warm appreciation include Stuart Reid (formerly of CPI) and Simon Zadek (currently Chief Executive of AccountAbility).

The partnering journey, whatever form it takes, can be exhilarating, inspiring, bewildering and exhausting. Our range of activities and services is designed to provide support and encouragement to those with whom we work and we hope that our collaborative approach helps to mitigate the sense of isolation still experienced by so many practitioners.

The Partnering Event – September 24-26, 2006 in Cambridge – celebrates the achievements of partnership practitioners from all over the world and represents something of a milestone in the history of cross-sector partnering. It also draws attention to the challenges still faced by those involved in brokering, planning, managing and developing cross-sector partnerships for sustainable development – whether such challenges are systemic and institutional in nature or whether they arise from the (not very) enabling environment. The Partnering Event is a reminder to individuals, whether participants or those who hear about it afterwards, that they are part of a growing movement and a widening network and that the cross-sector partnering approach is fast becoming an unstoppable force for system change, sustainable development and poverty alleviation.
We begin this special edition of Partnership Matters with a selection of ‘Leading Thoughts’ from individuals with a strong connection to The Partnering Initiative. Together they offer some original viewpoints on distinct aspects of partnering.

In the first issue of Partnership Matters Ken Caplan wrote an article entitled ‘The Purist’s Partnership: Debunking the Terminology of Partnerships’ that has subsequently become something of a landmark in partnership literature. We are therefore delighted that Ken has provided an equally thought-provoking piece for this special edition. This time the focus is on the skills required to anticipate partnership ‘enablers’ and ‘disablers’ that may arise within organisations, in relationships between partners and / or in the scope of a partnership as a whole. He proposes a number of approaches that may overcome disablers and create space for innovation.

Ken has consistently argued for greater precision and clarity in our use of ‘partnership language’ and this theme is implicit in the contribution from Richard Holloway. An experienced development specialist, Richard explores what lies behind the meaning of the all-embracing term ‘civil society’. When we describe a partnership with civil society, who, he asks, are we actually entering into a partnership with?

David F. Murphy has experience of working both within the United Nations (UN) system as well as outside it. Here he offers an overview of the often contentious history of UN-business partnerships, exploring some of the continuing debates about partnerships with the private sector and their impact on the UN.

Each year we include a selection of pieces from the assignments submitted by PCCP participants. These assignments, as many readers will be aware, include a review paper that incorporates an overview of literature on a partnership-related topic, a reflective essay which analyses the learning from collaborative activities undertaken during the course and a final project which applies course learning to individual partnering activities. This year we have chosen examples of each of these to share with our readers in our ‘Thinking in Progress’ section. The contributions come from individuals operating in different sectors, geographical regions and cultures. As will become clear, they also have quite different viewpoints.

The first piece from Saskia Merriman investigates the possibility of a partnership, between the NGO GAP and the company Thames Water, to raise awareness about water use and efficiency. In so doing it draws out generic issues relating to organisational perspectives on the process of scoping a new partnership. To date very little has been written about this early stage of preparatory work in partnering and Saskia’s piece is a welcome contribution to the topic that serves as a basis for future investigation in this area.

Linking neatly with Richard Holloway’s think piece, Bolarinwa Onaolapo contends in his article that cross-sector partnerships must take cognisance of social capital in their work. Based upon a study conducted in the Niger Delta, Bolarinwa asserts that a ‘whole community’ approach, which considers associational activity and economic empowerment, is vital for the promotion of effective partnerships for development.

As cross-sector partnerships have developed and more resources are invested in them, the requirement of finding appropriate mechanisms for measuring their ‘worth’ has become increasingly pressing.
Karin Lorenzon explores this topic by linking arguments in the academic literature on evaluation to her insights from the methodologies used by Rio Tinto for assessing partnerships. She suggests that a solid but flexible practice-based focus is essential to add value to the partnership review process.

Girma Ejere has taken up the theme of David Runciman’s article, ‘Partnering the State’, in Partnership Matters Issue 1. Drawing from the examples of four different types of state; a failed state (Afghanistan under the Taliban), a transitional state (Ethiopia), a new democratic state (Poland) and, in more detail, a welfare state (United Kingdom), he examines the key factors that make partnering with this entity such a difficult task. He also provides recommendations that may help to overcome these challenges and maximise outcomes for all stakeholders.

The final piece from PCCP is a new one for our journal. It is an essay which reflects on the creation and development of one of the course’s learning partnerships in which participants are linked together on a six-month action research project that draws upon their varied partnering experiences. Rosemary Rop uses animal analogies to portray the challenges of working together in this way and questions why the group with which she worked did not seek to ‘fly’ as it might have. Her insights have important lessons for partnership practitioners and reinforce the importance of carefully considering how individual values and backgrounds influence our ability to work together creatively.

In the PBAS course, the development of ‘reflective’ practice is a key feature of the training. Candidates are required to submit a logbook in which they track and reflect on their professional brokering work throughout a three-month mentored professional practice period. The value of keeping a logbook as a prompt for a more reflective approach to partnering practice is reinforced in four short articles from participants from different PBAS cohorts. Sharon Laws outlines the personal and professional value of maintaining such a record. Renata Pereira explains how her logbook helped her to appreciate the issues to be addressed when working in partnership with business. Ernest Boucher recalls that a key learning element from his logbook was what it revealed to him about the team with which he worked. Reviewing his logbook entries retrospectively enabled him to pick up on patterns of behaviour that he may otherwise have missed. Re-reading the logbook was also important for Natalia Gonchar as this allowed her to more deeply understand one of the partnerships with which she worked and, through this, to instigate a more appropriate development strategy.

The Partnering Initiative, and the PCCP and PBAS courses, all place great emphasis on the importance of reflective practice when partnering. Such reflection, of course, always goes hand in hand with the development and application of practical tools and technologies for different phases of a partnership. The ‘Leading Edge Practice’ section of the journal offers accounts of what is happening at the coalface of partnership work where new ways of working are being tested and practice is subsequently revised in the light of experience. These are exciting pieces that we hope transmit some of the energy and vision that goes into the actual partnering process.

Rafal Serafin and Ros Tennyson recall an experience from 1993 when they brokered the idea of cross-sector collaboration in a one-day workshop. This novel approach for the time precipitated the emergence of the Krakow Development Forum (KDF) in Poland which, although short-lived, has had a lasting impact on the city of Krakow and beyond. A number of different partnership lessons emerge from this piece, not least, the blend of skills, competencies and commitment required by a broker if their work is to be effective.

Julie Mundy has developed a risk management tool for partnerships that promotes collaborative discussion of the potential risks facing partners by encouraging them to identify and articulate their underlying interests and concerns. Proactive risk assessment and management, she believes, enhance the ability of partnerships to pursue innovative, flexible responses to development challenges and provide longer-term solutions to them.

A partnership case study is offered by Jacqui MacDonald who charts the development of The Day Chocolate Company. Based upon the principles of a fair price,
profit-sharing and social investment, the company has worked to improve the livelihood of smallholder cocoa producers in West Africa by establishing them in the UK chocolate market and ensuring that they reap benefits from both growing cocoa beans and sales of the final products from them.

Salma Sadikha focuses on a successful partnership to provide water and sanitation service delivery to slums in the city of Bangalore. Promoting a broad and participatory approach, this partnership was piloted in three distinct slum areas. Salma identifies the main factors that contributed to its success which she believes are linked firmly to the principle of community involvement and which offer clear possibilities for replication.

In Zambia the Luangeni Partnership project between local farmers and the supermarket chain Shoprite has been widely acclaimed for its achievements in supporting community development. Efforts to replicate this partnership, however, have largely failed and Kavwanga E. Yambayamba seeks to explore the possible reasons for this. His preliminary findings demonstrate the importance of considering a range of particular contextual factors that influence replication possibilities, not least of which, is a clearer understanding of a broker’s role and capacity.

We are grateful to all our contributors for providing such interesting and thought-provoking articles. They offer a wide range of different perspectives and approaches to cross-sector partnering. It is our belief that such thoughtfulness contributes significantly to deepening knowledge and understanding about if, when, how and where cross-sector partnerships can make a real and lasting contribution to sustainable development.

It is, of course, the alumni of the PCCP and PBAS courses who, by combining their learning with rich and varied international experiences of partnering, have done so much to increase and sharpen partnership thinking and practice worldwide. So with real pleasure, as they meet to share experiences and ideas in the unique gathering that is The Partnering Event, it is to them that we dedicate this special issue of Partnership Matters.
LEADING THOUGHTS

Creating Space for Innovation: Understanding enablers for multi-sector partnerships

Ken Caplan

While the term ‘partnership’ suggests a certain simplicity and harmony, experience has shown that multi-sector partnerships (MSPs) are challenging to create and harder to maintain. Specific skills are required to work in partnership and the demands of MSPs underline that they must be supported from inception and continually strengthened. Such skills include the ability to forecast or anticipate the kinds of enablers and disablers that will impact on a partnership. These were the focus of a study carried out by BPD Water and Sanitation in 2005, the findings of which are summarised in this article.

The term partnership elicits much confusion. It is used to describe widely different constructs from loose networks and alliances to more institutionalised joint ventures. Commonly used definitions are generally too simplistic and tend to mask: (1) the various obligations to participate, (2) critical non-financial contributions and (3) the distinct differences between organisations that make the partnership process so challenging. Clearly partnerships involve some form of horizontal decision-making (i.e. shared power), different kinds of resources (beyond financing), and flexibility to adapt objectives and activities as circumstances dictate. While not interpreted as such in this analysis, the term ‘partnership’ in many countries also refers to a legal, contractual construct. BPD’s current (but constantly evolving) definition has been adapted from one created by AccountAbility:

Partnerships involve two or more organisations that enter into a collaborative arrangement based on:
1) synergistic goals and opportunities that address particular issues or deliver specified tasks that single organisations cannot accomplish on their own as effectively, and
2) whose individual organisations cannot purchase the appropriate resources or competencies purely through a market transaction.

Although partnerships can be formed for a variety of reasons, their primary purpose is generally to experiment with new products, services and/or approaches. Within these innovative frameworks, the level of ambition of MSPs may vary: do they seek to carry out a task and produce specific deliverables (like the installation of 500 water connections)? Or are they seeking more systemic change (like the development of new regulatory standards)? Against this context, it is critical to carefully analyse (and then frequently review) events, processes or other aspects that will slow down or prevent progress (disablers) or, on the contrary, speed up and assist it (enablers).

Common enablers and disablers

Enablers and disablers overlap in many ways and can generally be grouped around three strands of inquiry:

1. Organisational cohesion

Partnership practitioners often refer to the challenge of creating and/or sustaining the internal buy-in that allows them to pursue partnership activities with greater authority. Internal dynamics may be a hindrance or a help. Factors that warrant further analysis include the ‘distance’ between the partnership representative and the institutional decision-makers, and how much authority the former has to adequately represent the interests of their organisation. The distance of the partnership from the organisation’s core business, combined perhaps with the organisational culture or spirit of innovation and experimentation, needs to be understood. This may also be reflected in the ability of the partner representative to overcome competition (for funding and other assets, ownership of ideas, etc.) within his
or her own organisation. Partnership practitioners also need to ask whether the timing is right within their own organisation to pursue partnership goals with a particular set of partners.

2. Relationships between partners
Many participants entering into a MSP, especially for the first time, report a steep learning curve. They speak of misconceptions amongst MSP participants of different sector perspectives and interests.

Significant energy should be placed on understanding historical, ‘cultural’ or other contextual factors at an early stage of the partnership, without necessarily expecting full agreement. Of critical importance is a mutual understanding of the deal breakers, i.e. those events or decisions that would force one partner to exit. Rather than promoting trust too early, partners should ensure that the processes for making decisions, implementing activities and resolving conflict are as predictable as possible.

Decisions around who should be involved are important to MSPs. Greater inclusion can make partnerships more innovative – generating new ideas from a larger pool of participants. Many argue that, because it creates enhanced buy-in and more tailored solutions, greater inclusion ensures a greater chance of creating sustainable systems. More limited participation, on the other hand, facilitates the creation of more manageable, stronger accountability mechanisms (fewer players equals fewer people to keep an eye on). Whilst there are continued calls for all stakeholders to be involved in decision-making, in practice this can be both unworkable and unwieldy. For more broad-based partnerships, to facilitate stakeholder engagement and a consolidation of voice, different stakeholder groups, in the water sector at least, appear to be creating sector-based coalitions to channel participation. The challenge then becomes ensuring proper representation through these channels.

Issues likely to cause problems between partners may revolve around competitive advantage including: for companies, agreements over promoting their own brand versus generic branding; for the public sector, partner decisions that impact on its relations with other agencies; and for NGOs, those decisions that impact on their reputation and credibility. A second issue concerns valuing resource contributions when each partner feels that their contribution is undervalued, while a third involves differing expectations around timeframes, progress and public relations (including not just marketing the initiative but transparency around information-sharing that, again, may impact on competitive advantage). Supporting and/or participating in the establishment and development of a MSP is not the same as issuing a contract against pre-defined criteria. This pre-supposed flexibility and thereby unpredictability around outcomes unnerves some participants, donors included.

With regard to competitive advantage, an enabling response to such rivalries would be to ensure that the MSP is more programme than project focused, including more organisations and appealing to the wider business case for each type of partner (a larger overall market, more people served, greater voice for poor communities), i.e. paying more attention to the benefits to the sector as a whole rather than to specific organisations. The lesson seems to be that for more systemic change, the more organisations involved the better. Risk analysis and some greater understanding of the stakes for each partner will clarify issues around valuing resources. Finally, dialogue and regular review between partners is probably the main recourse to overcoming different expectations.

Most partnership practitioners express surprise at the amount of time it takes to get a partnership initiative off the ground. Although there are now a variety of discussion tools that can be used to ‘speed up the process’, partnership initiatives still require sufficient time to generate interests, ensure that incentives can be aligned and obtain buy-in from related stakeholder groups. Nonetheless, partnership building activities are often perceived by practitioners and external stakeholders closer to the operational level as slow and costly. Again, defining quick milestones may be the most appropriate strategy to bring people together.

Generally the goal is for the partnership initiative to meet its objectives and then to close down, take on new objectives or transform into a different institutional form that may be more contract or transaction-based. Though the partnership approach will no doubt be around forever, individual initiatives need not be. The challenge thus becomes how and
when certain innovations can become institutionalised. The nature of creating institutions, however, also generates the need for their own self-perpetuation. A frank discussion is necessary regarding the point at which partners would agree that the partnership has done the job it was established to do.

3. Appropriateness of the MSP's scope

Whether ambitious and aiming to effect systemic change or more modest and aimed at meeting the needs of a specific target community, overarching themes that influence how realistic the scope of the MSP is include; sufficient and readily available resources, adequate market knowledge and appropriate communications to convince the sceptics. Each of these factors is influenced by the timing of the initiative.

MSPs can easily be overtaken by external perceptions, particularly where there is a lack of early success stories to demonstrate the value of the initiative. A pragmatic response would be to focus on reaching initial tangible achievements to demonstrate the value of its work. The current challenge of answering the sceptics is not helped by the lack of appropriate and effective mechanisms and frameworks to measure and evaluate both the processes and the outcomes of MSPs.

Some challenges are more fundamental, however, and relate to normative debates around, for example, the role of the private sector in the delivery of water and sanitation services. More action may be needed to ensure that external stakeholders understand that a combination of public, private and civil society sector inputs may be the only way to achieve the objective. Otherwise governments allocating a portion of funding to MSP arrangements are likely to be criticised for ‘subsidising the private sector’.

Where communities have no experience with partnership activities or where they have participated in ineffective or poorly designed projects, partners will have difficulty aligning community interests around new innovations. Partnerships also need to recognise that they are not operating in a vacuum, and thereby must make special efforts to understand other initiatives in the areas that are likely to be impacted by, or impact on, the partnership.

MSP practitioners often refer to what might be called “a partnership moment” – a specific point in time where the circumstances are right for a partnership initiative to flourish. The timing of the initiative can be hampered by any number of factors including upcoming elections, staff or boardroom changes, competition from similar initiatives, etc. Assessing whether the timing is wrong may be fairly straightforward. Assessing whether the timing is right, however, is not always so easy.

Disablers specific to international and local MSPs

Many of the enablers and disablers discussed above easily resonate with MSPs at the international or national and local levels. Some however are fairly specific to either one or the other. With regard to mechanics, competition and procurement rules stand out as the principal issue for initiating and operationalising MSPs internationally. More strategically though, at this level, the greatest risk stems from the wider thematic and normative discussions around governance, the role of the private sector in water supply and sanitation, shifts in corporate investment trends (as a function of political and financial risk), civil society voice, etc.

Unsurprisingly, at the national/local level, regulation is mentioned more often as an enabling or disabling factor. Challenges here largely relate to the piecemeal approach that many partnerships choose to take; focusing on one aspect of the problem even though they might assemble a variety of actors to do so. Given all the effort it takes to bring different partners together, the overarching message is that partnerships should generally be more ambitious in their goals.

Strategies for overcoming disablers

According to BPD’s analysis, three basic strategies are most likely for dealing with a barrier. The partnership may seek to:

- Influence or overcome the obstacle by, for example, appealing to decision-makers to change the rules or give special dispensation for a pilot approach;
- Circumvent the obstacle by enlisting the support of new partners or other resources that
allow for different approaches to be used; or

• Redirect the MSP or backtrack away from the obstacle by shifting the focus of the initiative or the project (i.e. away from a certain type of technology, approach, or geographic focus).

The challenge for partnership practitioners is to determine which of these strategies will contribute most to the effectiveness of the partnership. Planning ahead will reduce the likelihood of a MSP being over-stretched at a later date, by making a realistic assessment of level(s) of ambition and adapting plans and/or resources accordingly.

Such planning, however, needs to carefully consider the dynamic nature of partnerships and how far a strategy to overcome one problem might lead to other unexpected and unhelpful outcomes. It is also essential that due attention is given to the power relations, politics and personalities that shape a partnership’s development.7

NOTES

1 This essay has been extracted from a more detailed document, Creating Space for Innovation: Understanding Enablers for MSIs in the Water and Sanitation Sector, authored by Peter Newborne and Ken Caplan, which includes a dialogue tool for practitioners and partnership brokers and forms part of a series that also provides guidance on partnership agreements and partnership evaluation. Though generic in nature, it should be noted that these documents (available, with the references mentioned below, at www.bpdws.org) have all been produced against the backdrop of specific challenges within the water and sanitation sector.

2 The study followed on from important work conducted in 2002 that reviewed how regulatory frameworks impede partnerships and the possibility for partnerships to inform regulation of water and sanitation services.

3 Building Partnerships for Development in Water and Sanitation (BPD) is a not-for-profit membership organisation that supports public, civil society and private sector decision-makers and practitioners engaged in partnerships that provide water and sanitation services in poor communities. Active since 1998, BPD focuses on how best to structure, manage and assess such multi-stakeholder collaborative arrangements.

4 AccountAbility is a London-based organisation with international membership that seeks to promote accountability in sustainable development. For more information and details of recent publications on Partnership Governance and Accountability see www.accountability.org.uk


6 For further analysis, the reader should refer to Stott, L. (2003) ‘Listening to the critics: Can we learn from arguments against partnerships with business?’ Trigger Paper for PCCP2, and a forthcoming document on partnership evaluation from BPD.


8 For example, a critical obstruction to local people developing innovative solutions was lack of access to credit, lack of recognition through land rights and lack of legal channels for expressing a grievance (an ineffective small claims court, the lack of an approachable help desk at the utility, etc.).

9 Though not discussed in detail here these issues are implicit throughout.

The intention of this piece of work has been to identify factors that both support and constrain partnership working. For further detail about the negotiations around options for forging the relationship itself see: Evans, B., McMahon, J. & Caplan, K. (2004) The Partnership Paperchase, Structuring Partnership Agreements in Water and Sanitation in Low-Income Communities, BPD, London.
Much partnership rhetoric refers to “tri-sector partnerships” between business, civil society organisations and government agencies. Closer examination of what is referred to as “civil society organisations” reveals them usually to be international NGOs, or large national NGOs. These represent a part (and probably a small part) of the total work of civil society organisations (CSOs) in development. This article looks at the variety of CSOs and tries to think through how they might fit into partnerships with business and government agencies.

**Ignored but important CSOs**

In a workshop held by INTRAC¹ I remember being very struck by the comments of Alan Fowler² as the discussion ranged over the role and value of NGOs. He said that for a Masaai in Kenya and Tanzania the most important association that he or she belonged to was their age set. This was a group of people of similar ages who went through certain rites of passage together to become adults and who, from that time forward, would have mutual obligations to one another. Fowler said that such age sets would not be generally thought of as NGOs, would not be registered with any government departments and would be unlikely to be the recipients of any international aid. We can also add that they would be unlikely to receive any overtures from business for potential partnerships. We need to be aware that civil society encompasses such organisations and associations just as much as it encompasses (for instance) a local office of CARE or OXFAM.

Do not dismiss this as anthropological romanticism. The most important organisations in the lives of many people in the South are organisations which never appear on the radar screens of the official aid community.³ And they are not all isolated and rural. Eder is the name for what was originally (and still largely is) a burial society in Ethiopia. When the Dergue’s Stalinist philosophy forbade all non-state associations in Ethiopia, eder were allowed to continue and, as a result of being the only non-state actor permitted, soon took on the role of many other community organisations and became very important to citizens of Ethiopia. Arisan in Indonesia, merry-go-rounds in Kenya, tontine in West Africa, and stokvel in South Africa are all examples of institutions that are immensely important to people in those countries – particularly women. These are vibrant and effective mutual assistance and mutual insurance organisations but very few international businesses know they exist or would think to partner with them.

Those interested in cross-sector partnerships largely understand civil society to be composed of international NGOs, or large national NGOs, rarely encompassing the kinds of organisations described above.¹ In the same way, their understanding and affiliation is largely to international businesses, not local firms, and to national government, not local government. This article seeks to expand our thinking about cross-sector partnership so that it includes the wide variety of CSOs (beyond NGOs), as well as the range of local enterprises and organs of local government, which I would argue are, with CSOs, perhaps more appropriate partners.

**Definitions (again)**

As soon as we start discussing civil society we fall into definitional and classificatory problems. The following is my vocabulary, largely derived from CIVICUS,⁴ an organisation that has perhaps done most to educate governments and donors about CSOs, and, in particular, their Civil Society Index,⁵ which is a research
exercise to examine the state of civil society in any country in the world. CIVICUS defines civil society as “the arena, outside of the family, the state and the market where people associate to advance common interests”. Within the civil society arena people associate for different purposes, all of which are non-governmental and non-profit. The same people can also associate in a government arena as a civil servant or in the market arena as a small shopkeeper but their motives and behaviour are different from when they are associating in the civil society arena.

Further breaking down those who associate in the civil society arena, and here I am departing from CIVICUS, we can find:

- **Mutual benefit organisations** i.e. those which provide benefits to their members (like village self-help groups, credit unions, clans, ethnic groups and religious sects);
- **Public benefit organisations** i.e. those which provide (or seek to provide) benefits to specific members of the public (like the disabled or the illiterate) or to the public at large (on such topics as the environment or anti-corruption, or human rights); and finally,
- **Unacceptable organisations** i.e. fake entities which may be business or government agencies in disguise, pretending to advance common interests while actually advancing their own.

**New ideas in civil society**

Figure 1 provides a schematic of this breakdown of CSOs which inhabit the arena of civil society. As can be seen there are many more kinds of CSOs than common and accepted NGOs. The schematic also introduces CSOs as one of the institutions of a normative ‘Civil Society’ when we have democratic and well-governed institutions of Business, Media, Parliament and Judiciary, Executive, Independent Accountability Institutions, Universities and Local Government.

**FIGURE 1: An overview of the state, civil society institutions and organisations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Nation State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil society sector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSTITUTIONS OF A CIVIL SOCIETY**

- Independent accountability institutions
- Universities
- Civil society organisations
- Local authorities

**Mutual benefit organisations** (Benefiting their members)
- Religious groups
- Indigenous Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Federations
- Induced community organisations and federations
- Ethnic organisations
- Political organisations
- Employment-related associations
  - Professional
  - Trade unions
  - Chambers
  - Trade associations
- Co-operatives
- Mass organisations or movements
- Recreational/cultural

**Public benefit organisations** (Benefiting the public)
- Private philanthropic
- Public philanthropic
- Religious
- Civic organisations
  - Law
  - Governance
  - Democracy
- NGOs (developmental and charitable)
  - Service delivery
  - Research
  - Advocacy
  - Apex
  - Umbrella
- Non-profit companies

**Unacceptable organisations** (Not benefiting members or public)
- Brief case NGOs
- Violent, extremist organisations
- Exclusive, divisive organisations
- NGOs linked to crime
- Pretender NGOs
  - PONGOs (Politicians’ NGOs)
  - GONGOs (Government NGOs)
  - BONGOs (Business NGOs)
Another schematic (Figure 2) suggests a further use of the term ‘civil society’ as an ideal term for the society that is desired. All sectors of a society can contribute to a normative civil society where they overlap. In this diagram they exhibit good governance where they connect in the centre, but they also all have the possibility of exhibiting poor governance at the outer edges. As we all know, there are badly governed businesses, governments and civil society organisations, none of which contribute positively to the growth of a civil society.

FIGURE 2: All three sectors contributing to an ideal civil society

This area represents the ideal civil society

Does this help us with partnerships?

Now that we have further defined our understanding of civil society and CSOs and introduced new ways to use these words, how does this help us with cross-sector partnerships? I suggest three possibilities:

1. Collaboration between businesses, CSOs and local governments for a more civil society

One of the consequences of decentralisation in many countries in the world is that those responsible for sub-national bodies in the country (states, provinces, districts) begin to appreciate that they have the power to organise things differently from the previous national pattern or model. Often spurred by the desire to attract business investment to their province, there is a distinct possibility of multi-stakeholder collaboration to improve practices which will increase investment, make existing investment more productive, and improve the quality of life of the citizens. These multi-stakeholder avenues are well-suited to cross-sector partnerships.

2. Sharper identification by businesses of the CSOs that have real impact

There are, in many societies, counter-intuitive trends which reveal citizens’ energies and creativity, but which may not be the kinds of organisations and associations that are well organised, can interface simply with businesses or easily offer collaborative possibilities. An increasing number of communities, in disgust at the poor quality of government schooling, are opening up their own self-help schools; many communities scared of AIDS are turning to evangelical churches; many informal communities frustrated with unworkable government regulations are occupying land and creating their own shanty towns. Many more unemployed youth are becoming gang members, both to defend themselves and in search of self-esteem. Citizens, of whatever kind, are consumers of business goods and services — what is needed is more creative identification of the common points of contact. It is, I think, unlikely that businesses which do not have a full-time social development arm would be able to find points of contact with such groups. This argues for businesses to develop their own social development foundations.

3. Collaborating with the support centres for CSOs

Because of their distance from the well organised NGOs that have been their partners in the past, it may be difficult for businesses to find collaborative possibilities with CSOs. However, there is one block of organisations that is relatively easy for businesses to deal with and which do interface with the further reaches of civil society. These are the support organisations or resource centres for CSOs; the organisations that train them, encourage them and build up their competence and capacity. It would seem to me that a business could make a strategic investment and provide valuable services to CSOs through working by proxy with such organisations.
CIVICUS has said that defining civil society is like “nailing a pudding to the wall”. If we continue to talk of CSOs in cross-sector partnerships we need to be prepared to look at the whole pudding.

NOTES

1 International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) www.intrac.org

2 Co-founder of INTRAC, Board Member of CIVICUS and author of a variety of publications on NGOs.

3 For example, the World Bank’s very comprehensive Local Level Institutions Studies in Indonesia, 2002-4 (set up with all the rigours of random sampling) revealed a wealth of mutual and religious associations to which people belonged, but very rarely uncovered any NGOs.


5 www.civicus.org

6 Described in their literature as “A Participatory Needs Assessment and Action Planning Tool for Civil Society”

7 These are referred to by Alan Fowler as “pretenders” in his book, Striking a Balance – A Guide to Enhancing the Effectiveness of NGOs in International Development, Earthscan, 1997.
While we already have decades of experience working with governments in the developing world, we now recognise the importance of working with other development actors, from grassroots civil society organisations to multinational enterprises, to ensure that the poor are not left behind.

MARK MALLOCH BROWN
Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

The United Nations system plays a critical role in promoting international co-operation on development, humanitarian assistance, human rights and security. Through the efforts of individual companies and industry associations, private sector business “can contribute in several ways to the realisation of the development goals of the United Nations” through the mobilisation of “financial resources, access to technology, management expertise and support for programmes”, among other forms of assistance.

By bringing together their respective competencies for the greater global good, the UN and business have the potential to develop innovative partnerships to respond to many of the key development challenges of our time: the impact of climate change; human security; the prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS and other major diseases; the generation of new investment, entrepreneurship and employment; and financing for development.

As a global partnership in action, UN-business collaboration offers considerable promise as a means of contributing to the realisation of targets such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the same time, the Organisation, its Member States and wider stakeholders recognise that such co-operation “shall serve the purposes and principles embodied in the [UN] Charter” and “shall be undertaken in a manner that maintains the integrity, impartiality and independence of the United Nations.”

Furthermore, the UN’s business partners are expected “to take into account not only the economic and financial, but also the developmental, social, human rights, gender and environmental implications of their undertakings.”

This article offers a brief overview of the UN-business partnership experience, encompassing its origins, evolution, and current form, as well as some of the ongoing debates about the value and values of such forms of collaboration.

The roots of UN-business partnership

Although partnership has been recognised as a key component of international development policy for more than three decades, the active participation of business as a development partner is a more recent phenomenon and one which is still not universally embraced by all development actors. Businesses have had relationships with the United Nations since its inception in 1945. At its most simple level, the private sector has historically met, and continues to meet, the procurement needs of an organisation as large as the UN. Business has also taken an active interest in the UN’s political, economic and social debates from the outset. The International Chamber of Commerce and other business interests were represented at the founding United Nations Conference on International Organisation in San Francisco. Business and industry widely endorsed the new UN Charter, as exemplified by the “earnest and enthusiastic support” of General Electric.

Early on the pattern of UN-business relations took on a regulatory flavour with proposals from 1945 onwards for international action on restrictive business practices. This pattern
intensified and continued as UN membership expanded in the 1950s and 1960s with former colonies in Asia and Africa gaining independence and advocating international regulation of commodity prices.

Towards the end of the 1960s, two significant books were published that offered a hint of an emerging UN partnership agenda albeit excluding non-state actors. In 1968, Richard Gardner and Max Millikan published *The Global Partnership* to be followed in 1969 by Lester B. Pearson’s *Partners in Development*. Both books expressed optimism about the UN’s role in promoting international development and identified nation-states and donors as the other major global partners of the day. Remarkably, both books failed to recognise any explicit role for either businesses or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the global partnership process.

Developments in the 1970s confirmed the UN-business relationship as being less about partnership and more about regulation. In 1972, the Economic and Social Council unanimously requested the Secretary-General to appoint a Group of Eminent Persons to study the role of transnational corporations (TNCs) and their impact on the development process. This led in 1974 to the establishment of the Commission on TNCs and in 1976 to the start of a process to develop a UN Code of Conduct for TNCs. Designed to become the first multi-laterally agreed framework governing all aspects of the relations between states and TNCs, the proposed code was expected to include standards to protect the interests of both host countries and private investors.

However, by the mid-1980s, efforts to draw up a TNC code had been more or less abandoned. In March 1991, the US government requested all its foreign embassies to lobby their host governments to “quietly build a consensus against further negotiations” on the UN Code. The Code’s official demise came in 1992, when the president of the UN General Assembly reported that “delegations felt that the changed international environment and the importance attached to encouraging foreign investment required a fresh approach.” With the end of the Cold War and globalisation gathering momentum, the time for UN-business partnerships had also arrived.

**The UN-Business partnership era**

The high-profile 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro offered a much more inclusive vision of partnership than had been advocated by Pearson in 1969. The new global partnership called for at Rio grew out of recognition that international co-operation needed more than traditional forms of foreign aid. A key point was the assertion that global partnerships would only be effective if based on new levels of co-operation between all key sectors of society and government. One of the major achievements of the UN system, both at Rio and beyond, has been the integration of global partnership principles into international policy processes. Representatives of all of the major groups identified in Agenda 21 at Rio – business and employers’ organisations, trade unions and workers, NGOs, indigenous peoples, local authorities, youth groups, women’s organisations, farmers and the scientific community – are now actively engaged in the development and implementation of policy frameworks for sustainable development and other global issues.

Following the appointment of Kofi Annan as Secretary-General in 1996, the role of business as both a development actor and UN partner gained further momentum. The launch of the UN Global Compact in 2000 brought strategic leadership on UN-business-civil society engagement and a supportive value-based platform for both responsible business practice and UN institutional learning. The strategic partnership value of the Global Compact, according to Georg Kell and David Levin, is that it makes “the UN relevant by leveraging its authority and convening powers in ways that will actually produce the positive social change it aspires to create.” With more than 3,000 participants, including over 2,500 businesses in 90 countries around the world, the Global Compact has become the world’s largest corporate citizenship initiative.

In addition to the pioneering partnership work of the Global Compact, there is growing consensus that UN partnership with non-state actors is now a priority at both the policy and programme levels across the UN system. From the Cardoso Commission on UN-Civil Society Relations to the Commission on
Private Sector and Development
and from the Millennium Project
to the Secretary-General’s 2005 report ‘In Larger Freedom’, UN agencies and other international organisations are being challenged to build and strengthen their relationships with the private sector, civil society and other development actors.

UN partnership policy is also being transformed into action. Recent research reveals a growing range of UN-business collaboration in the following areas:

- **Policy dialogue:** encompassing both formal and informal engagement in intergovernmental processes including the development of norms and standards

- **Global advocacy:** organising joint campaigns to raise public awareness about the UN and its goals, targets and programmes

- **Resource mobilisation:** sharing and co-ordinating resources for development projects and humanitarian assistance including technical advice, funding, employee volunteering and in-kind support

- **Information and learning:** facilitating the exchange and sharing of knowledge, research and collaborative learning

- **Operational delivery:** co-operating on the design and implementation of on-the-ground projects

- **Investment and market mechanisms:** securing private investment for development (e.g. job creation, provision of services, infrastructure) and supporting the expansion of sustainable markets for socio-economic empowerment

The expansion of the UN Global Compact and other forms of UN-business partnership activity demonstrates that the UN system is increasingly leveraging the knowledge, expertise and other resources of the private sector to support the achievement of UN goals and targets. Despite this enthusiasm and momentum, many partnership sceptics remain in the wider UN stakeholder community and indeed within the UN itself. Although the language of partnership and co-operation increasingly infuse the UN’s work with the private sector, the collaborative approach is not without its critics. For example, Judith Richter, who has worked as a consultant for UNICEF and WHO, expresses concern over the influence of large corporations upon the UN system. Kenny Bruno of CorpWatch.com uses the term ‘bluewash’ in his report *Greenwash*+10 and raises questions about the motives and actual practices of companies that are “wrapping themselves in the UN flag and claiming to be champions of UN values such as human rights and poverty elimination, as well as environmental protection.”

A significant issue that emerges from these critiques is that the engagement of individual companies in order to voluntarily improve their performance on any number of issues can be a distraction from a wider set of changes that need to be enacted within the global economic system for more environmentally sustainable, people-centred forms of development and targets such as the MDGs to be achieved. Ann Zammit of the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) suggests:

**While many see TNCs as unquestioned purveyors of development and progress, for others TNCs will not further development in the South unless these firms operate within an internationally agreed framework of ground-rules. This view is espoused not only by those protesting against the current form of globalisation: the work of many scholars demonstrates that neoliberal economic policies...do much to inhibit economic and social development in many parts of the world. This poses an important challenge to the UN partnership approach.”**

The implication arising from such critiques is that UN-business partnerships should not supplant the development and enforcement of legal and regulatory mechanisms to promote more responsible business globally. Given the above, it is not surprising that the 2005 UN General Assembly resolution on global partnerships encouraged “further efforts by...the private sector, to engage as reliable and consistent partners in the development process” and challenged the UN’s business partners to bring “social values and responsibilities to bear on a conduct and policy premised on profit incentives, in conformity with national laws and regulations.”
Towards a partnership learning agenda

The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs demonstrate that there is international consensus on the key challenges that have to be addressed in order to meet the needs and hopes of people everywhere. There is also growing recognition that the cause of ‘larger freedom’ can only be advanced by broad, deep and sustained global co-operation among states and non-state actors. Effective and accountable partnerships between strong and capable states, private sector businesses, civil society organisations and the UN system may actually be the only way to achieve wide ranging UN reforms as well as the MDGs.

There is also clear UN leadership and policy commitment to reforms that reshape the organisation dramatically with unprecedented boldness and speed. Global partnership between the UN and business should also be seen as one of cornerstones of the UN reform process. Both parties have much to learn from each other about how best to respond to complex global challenges, and how to reform their own organisations and to ensure that they are accountable to their respective stakeholders.

UN-business partnership learning has to date been limited. Despite high-level UN policy commitment to partnership and some evidence of individual UN agency action, there has been virtually no system-wide activity to develop capacity to broker, build and sustain cross-sector partnerships to achieve UN goals. To realise significant and sustainable change, it is vital to build capacity over time and on a number of fronts; at country, regional and global levels as well as within and between UN agencies. The diversity of partnering experience and needs across the UN system is substantial and this poses considerable challenges, particularly at the country level where co-ordination and coherence are most needed. The development of partnering skills and knowledge is also essential in cross-sector settings where UN staff and their business counterparts can learn together and from each other.

Partnering skills training alone, however, will not enable the UN system and the private sector to develop and implement innovative partnerships that contribute to the achievement of the MDGs and the broader development, human rights and peace aims of the UN. A wider range of actions and competencies will be required at all levels to build professional capacity and make the necessary adaptations to management practice within both the UN and the private sector. This will help to ensure that UN-business partnerships are genuinely productive and that they achieve greater reach, scale and impact.

NOTES


3 In this context, partnerships are defined as “voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits.” Ibid., p. 3.


5 Ibid, p. 2.


THINKING IN PROGRESS

Back to Basics: Business and NGO approaches to partnership scoping

Saskia Merriman

Water shortage is posing a new challenge for water companies in the UK. This article explores the potential for a partnership – and the issues this poses – between Thames Water (TW) and the environmental charity Global Action Plan (GAP) that would encourage people to change their behaviour to use water more efficiently.

Water is taken for granted in the UK given the perceived level of rainfall and because most houses are not metered. This situation is changing rapidly. According to TW’s Dr David Cook, London is a fairly dry city – it gets less rainfall than Rome, Istanbul or Paris. Current supply is only just meeting demand and the future looks challenging due to population growth, expected increase in demand of current customers, the effects of climate change and reduction in the resources available. The forecasts for London show a significant deficit and various approaches are needed to tackle this. Water efficiency is a key part of the strategy.

Encouraging behaviour change to promote water efficiency is notably difficult to achieve and measure, particularly when the majority of households do not have water meters. Furthermore it is almost impossible to prove the cost effectiveness of behaviour change projects in terms of the numbers of people reached. Given this situation, it is not surprising that the most common method for promoting water efficiency is large scale information provision, using leaflets, adverts and give-aways such as the save-a-flush, ‘hippos’ and water butts. It is recognised, however, that more innovative approaches are required such as, for example, new partnerships between water companies and environmental charities.

Creating such partnerships is complex. The first challenge is the lack of both theoretical and practical understanding on how to establish a partnership. Interviews with staff at TW and GAP revealed that none were familiar with the term ‘scoping’ in a partnership context. This immediately poses a dilemma for TW as there are a myriad of environmental charities it could partner with and no system for choosing between them. The situation is less complex for GAP as TW is an obvious and necessary partner for a water efficiency project.

Despite this lack of a scoping process there are some grounds for a partnership between TW and GAP because they have worked together previously and have established trust and respect. Interviews showed that as neither organisation has a formalised policy on partnership scoping, staff often work with the same organisations repeatedly. For TW, the underlining reason for doing this is their confidence in the credibility of their partner organisations. TW cite GAP’s track record and good reputation for delivery as incentives for partnering with them, alongside their vital third party endorsement of TW’s key messages. GAP staff feel that TW would bring credibility to GAP as an organisation but that water leakage problems might harm the credibility of a water efficiency message.

From this initial basis of trust and credibility it is easier for partners to get a good understanding of each other’s aims and objectives and their respective motives for partnering. This level of understanding is crucial in creating a partnership between TW and GAP because it will help to overcome a fundamental difference between the two organisations’ approach to promoting water efficiency.

The majority of TW’s water efficiency promotional methods are one directional; a message sent out to a target audience. GAP’s projects are always...
interactive and involve a two way discussion; an approach based on research into behaviour change. This means that the scale of activities is very different; GAP’s projects work intensively with a smaller number of people whereas TW’s approach reaches many people simultaneously. This difference in approach and a lack of understanding of the value of GAP’s methods are seen as key potential barriers to a stronger partnership. There are questions about whether, rather than working on one-off projects, TW would be willing to adopt GAP’s approach at a deeper level. Nevertheless, some TW staff do see the value of GAP’s approach to behaviour change.

Another factor related to the issue of scale is GAP’s relatively small size. Both TW and GAP staff acknowledge this as a barrier to partnering as it might limit the level of resources, skills and capacity the charity would be able to commit.

A critical issue identified by staff from both organisations is that of organisational buy-in and the danger of the partnership relying on one person. This is particularly so for TW although staff there see many incentives for such a partnership such as improved standing on business comparison indices such as the Business in the Community Index, positive impact on share price, improved reputation with the regulator and other stakeholders, and financial benefits including reduced demand for water.

Both TW and GAP appear to have a rather ad hoc approach to partnerships. This may be due, in part, to a lack of formalised scoping which results in partnerships being developed between organisations that already know and trust each other. The vast majority of practitioners who are working on cross-sector partnerships have learnt on the job, and on the basis of the TW-GAP example, it seems that the more partnership experience a person or organisation has, the less they feel they need processes (or language) to support what they are already doing. Where trust and a past working relationship exist there is more chance that barriers for partnership working can be identified and overcome. More strategic partnerships are not being created because staff with less partnering experience are not being trained in the partnership process. Opportunities are currently being missed for creating potentially innovative partnerships to solve new challenges, sharing existing lessons more deeply across organisations and developing the skill of creating new ‘partnering’ opportunities.

In terms of partnership scoping this research has identified some key areas for discussion without which a new partnership would struggle:

- **Credibility**: a partnership needs trust between the organisations in order to gain organisational support.
- **Barriers and incentives**: partnering organisations need clear incentives for partnering that are understood by all parties. Similarly, potential barriers should be identified early on and addressed.
- **Complementarity**: of goals, objectives, skills, and resources give the partnership the capacity to achieve its goals.
- **Organisational buy-in**: ensuring that the partnership is not reliant on one person and that the partnering organisations are prepared to commit the necessary resources.

GAP and TW have clear incentives to work together on a water efficiency project. There are potential barriers but overcoming these would create an innovative new approach to a growing problem.
1 Global Action Plan is a charity that delivers practical environmental projects to schools, businesses and communities in the UK. www.globalactionplan.org.uk

2 Dr David Cook, Water Resources Manager at TW’s Stakeholder Review meeting (8th November 2005).

3 Placed in a toilet cistern, a polyethylene ‘hippo’ confines and saves water when the toilet is flushed.


5 This echoes the EQUAL Guide for Development Partnerships (European Commission) Note 4, p2: “It is particularly important for NGOs to feel that they are accepted on an equitable basis as they may feel constrained in their ability to become credible partners because of financial and skills limitations”.

6 The importance of a history between partnering organisations is illustrated by Barrett, D., Austin, J. & McCarthy, S. (2000) Cross-Sector Collaboration: Lessons from the International Trachoma Initiative (p47) where a lead partner chose another over all the other options on the basis of successful previous relationships.
Cross-sector partnership: A new hope?

Cross-sector partnerships have assumed great importance in the quest for sustainable solutions to socio-economic challenges confronting the contemporary world. The existence of what appears to be a partnership boom is undeniable as previously intractable barriers, be they cultural, sectoral or geographical, have proved incapable of withstanding the enthusiasm with which collaborative endeavor is pursued or advocated for. However, a partnership is useful only if it produces desired outcomes when confronted with an obstinate development challenge, a category in which poverty fits perfectly.

The assertions of the 2005 UNDP Millennium Development Goal Report that, “extreme poverty remains a daily reality for more than one billion people” and that the situation has deteriorated in sub-Saharan Africa, reinforces what is common knowledge in international development circles. Nonetheless, if poverty is due to the “failure of households, communities, nations and regions to generate substantial livelihood capitals to overcome shocks and stresses”, then it is also necessary to examine the state of livelihood capitals; their interactions, interdependencies and relative utility in the fight against poverty. The Department for International Development (DFID) and others have classified livelihood capitals into natural, social, financial, physical and social capital. While considerable effort has been made towards addressing shortfalls in financial, natural and physical capital by either single sector agents or cross-sector partnerships, less than commensurate attention has been paid to social capital, despite the fact that it has been described as the “glue that holds societies together and without which there can be no economic growth or human well-being”.

A possible explanation may be the relative intangibility of social capital, or the limited understanding of its potential role in the development equation.

There does not appear to be a general consensus on the definition of social capital. Putman defines it as “features of a social organisation, such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit”. Carroll describes it as “the cumulative capacity of social groups to co-operate and work together for their common good.” It is generally accepted that social capital is an asset, and like any other asset it can be developed, harnessed, or depleted. Thus, as the target date for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals draws nearer, the need to adopt holistic – rather than mechanistic or even reductionist approaches – makes the integration of social capital enhancing initiatives into development efforts, especially those being pursued via cross-sector partnerships, inevitable.

Nigeria, like any other sub-Saharan African country, cannot afford the luxury of deploying development paradigms that have been undermined by the absence of social capital development considerations. This is particularly the case for the Niger Delta region of the country, which faces serious development challenges, due to the uneasy co-habitation of mineral affluence and extreme poverty in the same socio-geographical space. The persistence of poverty in the Niger Delta has not really been due to the lack of development efforts. In fact, there has been a high density of development efforts championed by government and multinational oil companies. These efforts have, however, been unilateral. That these single sector development initiatives are usually lacking in social capital considerations may suggest why they have not succeeded over the years. The key
questions therefore are; how well can cross-sector partnerships geared towards fighting poverty emerge in the Niger Delta, and how can social capital development initiatives be incorporated into their poverty reduction models?

**Anticipating cross-sector partnerships in the Niger Delta**

The emergence of cross-sector partnerships in the Niger Delta will be dependent on external facilitation by a credible entity with the requisite clout and capacity. This facilitator will help to bring the potential partners together where the opportunities and benefits of partnering are identified and appreciated. The Niger Delta Development Commission, operating under statutory empowerment as the agency responsible for development planning in the Niger Delta, is a potential candidate in this regard. Other options include engaging the professional services of a suitable NGO or development agency. However, the issue of how to fund the facilitative process may emerge and this has implications for the principles that underpin successful partnerships.

**Preparing the partners**

In the light of the issues raised above, a study was conducted in the Niger Delta’s Kula community. The study examined three main explanatory domains of social capital: associational activity, trust levels and collective activity. Exploring the dynamics of these domains in the community provided results that may mirror the entire Niger Delta situation and also offer insights which could be of policy interest to anticipated cross-sector partnerships.

Generally, the study found that trust levels appeared to be on the decline in the community, largely due to the combined effect of greater economic problems and the erosion of norms and values. Associational activity, which symbolises and also generates social capital in communities, was a casualty of declining trust levels and the time spent on livelihood pursuits. However, economic considerations influenced the rate and willingness to engage in associational activity. Furthermore, the influence of culture and custom was strong on associational membership although it did not help in fostering effective participation.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

Important opportunities exist for individuals and organisations seeking to collaborate towards addressing development challenges. Of central importance is the need to overcome barriers to collaboration within and across sectors. However in designing their programmes, potential partnerships should take the following into consideration:

1. Development programmes, especially those focused on building social capital at the community level, stand a greater chance of being sustainable if they also have an inbuilt economic empowerment component. It is obvious from the Kula context that economic considerations influence the rate and willingness to engage in associational activity. A convergence of associational activity and economic empowerment will substantially address developmental challenges in communities.

2. In order to include social capital in the development equation, and enhance the participation of groups and communities, customary associations could be used as entry points. This offers a strategic advantage in Niger Delta communities where the influence of culture is high. Although associational activity has been a victim of the societal reality in the Delta, its potency as a key ingredient in the quest for the replenishment of social capital makes a compelling case for intervention that promotes associational life.

3. There is a need for oil companies to re-examine their community engagement paradigms and introduce social capital enhancing approaches in order to ensure and sustain community unity. The imperative for a comprehensive review to determine the implication of current corporate-community engagement models on the various elements of social capital, which include trust, unity and associational activity, is real. The ‘whole’ community approach being driven by some oil companies
as a key community interface concept, coincidentally addresses this concern.

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11 Narayan (supra)
Rio Tinto’s partnerships with local communities and stakeholder groups are a practical manifestation of commitment to sustainable development goals. The company believes that partnerships can contribute to improved governance, shareholder confidence, better risk management, shorter start up times for new projects and exploration licences that are all good for business. Rio Tinto practitioners, together with partner organisations have developed a set of principles to manage this work. These include understanding the business drivers for all partners, the benefits and risks for all partners and the contribution and responsibilities of each partner, as well as establishing measurable programme objectives, documenting agreements and ensuring ongoing professional management.

Review and evaluation is an important element of Rio Tinto’s partnership work, the requirement for which is stipulated in formal partnering agreements. More than ten years experience of working with non-government and community organisations and learning how they engage best through partnership, has demonstrated to the company that the partnership review process can add value by serving a dual purpose of checking processes and relationships, as well as recording stories of partnership outcomes in a way that will excite the organisation, the communities with which it works and other stakeholders. The company also recognises the importance of reviewing evaluation strategies and processes over time as expectations of stakeholder groups and notions and manifestations of ‘sustainability’ in the partnership context are likely to change. ‘Added value’ is not a static idea either.

This article summarises insights from a selective, informed analysis of academic literature about review and evaluation outside the strict boundaries of ‘partnerships’ in order to illustrate the complexity of the beast called ‘review and evaluation’. It is hoped that it will provide a reference point for practitioners who are keen to use evaluation tools and processes as a strategic intervention to deliver value to their particular client group, whether it is a corporate enterprise, a government or non-government organisation.

Cardoza describes aspects of the review process as, “the ongoing iterative process of constructing reality into a vision for the stakeholders”. She contends this is through the review team’s roles as “interpreters, translators, and mediators”. The general literature around evaluation does not address specifically how the evaluation process might be used to enhance understanding and build societal capacity through ‘story telling’ as is suggested here. Rather it leaves one with an overwhelming sense that it is up to the judgement and skills of the practitioner to understand the diverse theories around evaluation, to conduct a robust situational analysis that produces clarity around purpose and intent, and then craft an approach that is ‘fit for purpose’.

Hansen puts the evaluation challenge very well:

Some authors recommend that evaluations be designed in terms of their purpose. Others recommend that evaluations be designed according to what is possible, what is legitimate and just or what change is planned in the characteristics of the evaluation object. Yet others recommend that evaluations be designed on the basis of analysis of the problem that the evaluated object is intended to solve. In other words, recommendations are influenced by a goals-means rationale, by a contingency-based goals-means rationale, by a...
context-based value rationale or by a programme theory rationale. Overall, the recommendations presented in the literature are ambiguous, and the design-programme theory of evaluation design evidently needs clarification.

In a business climate where the notion of engaging with other sectors using a cross-sector partnership approach is the norm rather than leading edge or even slightly ‘risky’, it makes sense to consider how impacts, notions of sustainability and added value can be expressed to fit with the contemporary needs of partners and key stakeholder groups.

As discussed in the broader literature around evaluation, review processes are potentially ‘empowering’ and useful on many strategically important levels. However, to be effective it is imperative to give careful consideration to the purpose or ‘use’ of any particular review or evaluation – and to ensure that the review is designed accordingly. Reviews are a strategic intervention in the partnering process and must be recognised as such. One size does not fit all, and it is dangerous not to acknowledge at the outset that:

... To assume that evaluation is all in the name of science or that it is separate, above politics, or “mere human feelings” – indeed, that evaluation is objective – is to deceive oneself and to do an injustice to others. Objectivity functions along a continuum – it is not an absolute or dichotomous condition of all or none. Fortunately, such objectivity is not essential to being critical.

Further observation by Fetterman on the issue of objectivity reinforces this point:

Anyone who has had to roll up her sleeves and get her hands dirty in program evaluation or policy arenas is aware that evaluation, like any other dimension of life, is political, social, cultural, and economic...Whose ethical principles are evaluators grounded in? Do we all come from the same cultural, religious, or even academic tradition?

...Assuming that we can “strictly control bias or prejudice” is naive, given the wealth of literature available on the subject, ranging from discussions about cultural interpretation to reactivity in experimental design.

It follows then that the pursuit of ‘objectivity’ and science in the name of evaluation and review is futile. Better to acknowledge this fact and move towards creative use of review and evaluation tools to demonstrate value – imperfect as the measures may be.

Taking these perspectives into account, some basic principles for partnership evaluation can be suggested. These are:

• Consider piloting a review with the explicit purpose of ‘gathering’ information to communicate the story of the partnership and sharing partnering achievements and results

• Regularly ‘review’ the review framework.

Any suggestion that partnership evaluations may be reframed with the purpose of creating communications – whether they be crafted as case studies or simply ‘stories about partnerships’ or ‘sustainable development stories’ is a work in progress. However, it would appear there is great potential to make evaluations ‘add value’, rather than to sit in the suite of ‘processes’ that have the potential to drain resources and energy. Evaluations, as strategic interventions, offer the possibility of bringing about focused change and improvement.

• Clarify and document the review’s purpose

• Ensure that the review design is transparent with possibilities for all partners to contribute to its terms of reference and its revision

• Develop criteria through which to review/assess the partnership relationship and communicate these clearly
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2 ibid


‘Choosing evaluation models – a discussion on evaluation design’ in Evaluation Vol. 11 (4); 447 – 462, SAGE publications


6 ibid
The idea of partnering with the state is a contentious one among both scholars and practitioners. At its most extreme this debate centres on whether or not to partner with dictatorial regimes to save lives and promote long-term development. However, even in democratic countries, partnering with the state raises ethical and practical problems. This article examines the core factors that make partnering with the state an arduous task. It also provides recommendations that may help to overcome these challenges and maximise outcomes for all stakeholders.

An overview
Co-operation is innate and found everywhere in nature. In society, it forms the basis of social dynamism and change. However, co-operation acquired an ideological and political disposition following the emergence of the state. Historically, although states have emerged from societal co-operation, they have nonetheless used this as a tool to advance their own aims. Though states may differ in forms, political ideology and the practice of democracy, they all share a common trait in exploiting partnering for political purposes. One can establish common attributes that constrain partnership working in a variety of different state formations:

**Afghanistan under the Taliban – a failed state**
Its ideology and behavior towards minorities and women and the division of the country into ethnic based regional fiefdoms under the control of brutal warlords represented the highest form of a failed state. Local and international NGOs found it impossible to partner with the Taliban, not just for moral and ethical reasons, but also because of the regime’s determination to impose its values on any form of partnering initiative. This posed a real dilemma for stakeholders who wanted to offer humanitarian aid and promote long-term economic development in the country.

**Ethiopia – a transitional state**
Following the overthrow of the pro-Soviet regime in 1991, the new government in Ethiopia created an ethnic-based federal system and promised democratic reforms, transparency and good governance. Co-operation is highly embedded in the traditions and social fabric of society but the economic and humanitarian situation in Ethiopia calls for even greater cross-sector co-operation.

However, evidence indicates that the state has required partnerships to justify how they will support government policies and priorities and NGOs and local initiatives are put under pressure to demonstrate political allegiance with the ruling party.

**Poland – a new democratic state**
In the newly democratic Polish state, partnerships are mushrooming throughout the country. Partnering with the state though is not as productive as might be expected. The ‘controlling’ history of states in the region and the focus on building new state institutions means that less value is given to grassroots involvement in civic activities. There is thus a perception of lack of focus, drive, resources and expertise so that partnering with the state becomes a difficult task.

**Britain – a welfare state**
The example of Britain is worth considering in some detail as, since coming to power in 1997, the government’s policies and strategies have been grounded in a collaborative approach with partnership arrangements. This focus is anchored in New Labour’s ‘third way’ political ideology and the conviction that
social capital is built through community involvement. New initiatives and institutions, such as Regional Development Agencies and the Learning and Skills Council were required to establish new forms of governance based on partnership and the full involvement of stakeholders. For instance the Learning & Skills Act (July 2000) and the Children Act (November 2004) constitute clauses that make partnership working a statutory requirement.

This state-created enabling environment for partnering has, however, been criticised for its heavy-handed central ‘intrusion’ into local arrangements. As Toynbee and Walker explain, the top-down approach has enabled the micro-management of the country from Whitehall. Local needs and involvement have turned into political exercises with key decisions – from setting objectives, to establishing milestones and monitoring outcomes - controlled by civil servants. In response, partners, particularly, service users and local communities are beginning to shy away from partnering since they feel that they have no voice in planning and delivery. A recent study among 14-19 Strategic Groups in education in London, for example, indicates the extent to which partners feel disempowered by the dominance of central government in partnerships. Many partners felt that the government dictated targets and priorities and used funding as a lever to influence outcomes. Equity, one of the pillars of effective partnering, is undermined when the government dictates its will through legislation, management structures, targets, funding and inspection regimes. In addition, the focus on targets and outputs rather than on long-term outcomes permeates the system. Most partnership initiatives, including those that are meant to be ‘community led’ such as the New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Renewal, are also run by civil servants from the centre or from Local Authorities.

The state is an abstract notion. It becomes a real entity through the government, which itself is realised through politicians and civil servants. Civil servants represent the government but, in spite of their individualities, they represent an entity that is non-personal and non-socialised. Thus, as Runciman puts it, even if, “things go wrong and representatives take bad decisions in the name of the state …the best we can hope for is that they will admit their responsibility and resign.” If not, they can always hide behind the “impersonal form of the state”. They are there primarily to support state interests rather than local needs. This means that once the key levers, funding and government lead, are gone, the partnerships collapse. Partnerships such as Education Action Zones and Single Regeneration Programmes disappeared as soon as funding came to an end and government bodies pulled out. The failure to address sustainability and community empowerment exposes serious flaws in the partnering process.

Conclusion
Partnering in society is a manifestation of social norms which form the basis of social change and progress. The essence of society is freedom and freedom is conceived and delivered in co-operation. On the other hand, the essence of the state is coercion and coercion is rooted in its norms and in its instinct for survival and expansion. Even though the state is a by-product of society, these differences in nature presuppose a greater potential for conflict than for co-operation and partnering.

However, both society and the state need each other. Partnering, provided that it mirrors community/ local needs and the promotion of strong stakeholder involvement, can cement a unity of purpose and action. The state has power, administrative structures, resources and expertise that can enrich partnering. In return, partnerships offer the state a way of working which can help reduce economic and political risks, and facilitate grassroots support and commitment.

Understanding both the differences and the complementarities of society and the state would help policy makers, practitioners and partnership brokers to synthesise their strengths into social benefits. Partnership brokers need to study the nature of the state that they are dealing with and map out the context within which they operating. They also need to consider: the possibilities for ensuring and promoting the
active involvement of key stakeholders, particularly, service users and the community; collective leadership and the prevention of domination from any single sector, such as the state and its representatives; a focus on outcomes as opposed to process, with clear timelines and expectations for these, and finally; the on-going monitoring and evaluation of both the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of partnerships.

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2 The Effectiveness of the 14-19 Strategic Groups in the London Boroughs of Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow, Study commissioned by LSC, London West, May 2005


“...Of elephants, ants, eagles and foxes...” the words coasted my mind on a private mental voyage away from the closing session of the second residential of the Post-graduate Certificate in Cross-sector Partnership (PCCP) in Cambridge. The colourful list of beasts were an analogy that I had suggested our partnership learning group use to portray the four real-life case studies on partnership which had became unknowing victims of a six-month study laboratory.

Our group vetoed the analogy on the basis of it being a potentially non-academic conceptual framework. We instead settled for a colourless, lessons learnt delivery, however deep in its insights. Intrigued by the culture of our group and the composite effect of our five personalities, I was confronted with the question of why, within the working dynamics of our recently ended learning partnership, unconventional analogies with eagles would be unlikely to fly.

I was assigned the task of conducting a comparative analysis of transparency, equity and mutual benefit in four case studies as the compilation of our group’s learning output. It was a task that I took pride in as I recognised it provided me some leeway to work alone. This was typical of my view of group work; that my effort as an individual would be more critical than what could be done by the group. The task itself ended up being far more difficult than I expected. I found myself unwittingly playing the role of evaluator whilst on my lap sat four cases which uniformly lacked an objective or scientific basis for evaluation.

Without weighted stakeholder feedback from within these partnerships, the extent to which principles of equity, transparency or mutual benefit were addressed was truly only known to the partners themselves. As I studied the cases drafted by my colleagues further, I realised too that they themselves could only be speculators. Rein’ reference to Floods’ four windows somewhat justified my dilemma here in explaining that an evaluator must necessarily make sense of the views and experience of different stakeholders who, although looking at a partnership through the same window, may see different things.

‘My task’ in the learning partnership

When our group reached a decision with speed and little probing on the nature of the partnership learning assignment I suffered internal conflict. My professional values, loathe to quick fixes and unimaginative solutions, were spurred to internal resistance but my social upbringing ruled the day and, unremarkably, I conformed. However, this suppression required release and I took comfort in the thought that I would compensate by adopting a saviour role in other tasks.

Tameness and pragmatism were evident cultural tendencies within our group. This was illustrated in how we unquestioningly selected the partnership task at the beginning; our generally suppressed, conservative presentation style at the end, and in our interactions throughout the six month period in which we worked together.

Where gaps emerged, group members stepped forward to provide safety nets. It was clear that co-operation as a value was vital to our group’s successes.

Co-operation assisted the group in realising its objectives but had its downside in dealing with the individual. It dawned on me rather late that our learning partnership had not done justice in benefiting from the presence of one who I will refer to as Sally. The organisation Sally worked with had unique insight built through years of brokering cross-
sector partnerships. However, having chosen by default a medium of English to communicate, the ‘English-as-first-language’ participants blazed the ant trail. The wealth of Sally’s professional experience as a partnership broker thus remained unexplored.

Ewington illuminates through role-play how contrasting codes of cultural behaviour can cause emotional, intellectual and social stress. He advises that personal autonomy and the ability to pursue professional goals in spite of difficulties are critical to being able to influence across cultures. My experience, however, illustrated by our group’s handling of Sally, was that focus on overcoming cultural barriers in a bid to influence, rather than being influenced, could hinder the maximisation of benefits. Caplan suggests that the structure of engagement itself can be disenfranchising, disabling a partner from optimal participation. If our group were to do it again I would make greater effort to proactively address difficulties faced by ‘a Sally.’

Our group with another

Our group had the opportunity to see itself in a mirror of antonyms through a review, as ‘critical friends’, of the work done by another learning partnership group. They, like us, had freedom to define how they would achieve learning and what kind of laboratory would be fashioned to test it. Our group perceived their task as ambitious and unsafe in contrast to ours. We also observed that relations between some members of the other group were antagonistic, in reverse to ours, where friendly co-operation was the unspoken law.

In spite of the contrast between us, both groups were deficient, albeit to differing extents in providing their members with ‘containment.’ This term is defined by Tennyson, as the ‘vessel’ that the individual needs from the group ‘in which the intensity of human interactions and divergent views that are (probably) essential to its work can unfold constructively.’ Both groups faced this challenge; theirs being characterised by unresolved conflict and ours frozen by politeness.

Appreciation for application

As our selected four case studies were dragged back under review again, Residential Two allowed learning to come full circle, in both a humbling yet illuminating way. In evaluating the principles of transparency, equity and mutual benefit, what emerged was a three-tiered framework of analysis showing how at the root level culture, values and deep seated beliefs within a partnership contribute to shaping a second level of motivations, which in turn determined the third level; outcomes.

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<th>Partnership beliefs, perceptions, values, culture</th>
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<td>Partnership motivations</td>
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The principle of transparency was determined by deep-seated perceptions concerning safety and confidence. This was illustrated in our business-driven partnership case study where, in a context where government is perceived as corrupt and holding vested interests, the business invited them to the table only when it would be impossible for them to interfere by ‘typically’ pursuing personal interests at the expense of partnership goals. This business-held perception of government shaped its willingness to disclose information and determined the real outcome of transparency in the end. Depending on the trust threshold, and in a somewhat strategic ‘foxy’ manner, business used transparency to win.

In examining equity we drew the conclusion that although institutions or individuals will differ in power, skills, influence or resources, a partnership can promote equity through even-handedness, structure and agreed shared decision-making processes. Yet here too the three-tiered analytical framework of beliefs, motivations and outcomes applied. This was exemplified in our case study of a government-initiated partnership whose elephant-like financial role led the other partners to see themselves as tepid followers. They asked the money elephant, ‘tell us what to do,’ in spite of enormous effort by government to provide equitable partnership space. As all strata of society are shaped by beliefs, structure and practice, within partnerships the assurance of the elephant and the psychological needs of the non-elephants both need attention to realise equity benefits.

Mutual benefit as a principle was understood as strongest when all the partners established a higher
will, based on identified shared, deeper values. One of our group’s partnership goals was to preserve their countries’ culture as ‘capital’ for development. This motivation resulted in remarkable individual and collective partnership benefits. Our conclusion was that the higher will to preserve heritage contributed to partnership purpose and unity. My analogy of this partnership was a colony of ants, with their focused industry and mysterious sense of purpose, striving to attain a higher good.

Conclusion
Groups, like individuals, are shaped by a kaleidoscope of experiences that form a worldview, determining values and motivation. The cultural patterns which emerge designate whether a partnership will be dominated by the larger than life elephant; operate with the removed majesty of an eagle; become unpredictably foxy or as mutual and interdependent as ants, focused on empire-building for the good of all. Dynamics within partnerships are not useful so much to read or stereotype, but more to acquire the consciousness needed to work with each animal objectively, encourage strengths and deal with weaknesses. Understanding this within partnerships in practice has been my biggest lesson.

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The Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme (PBAS) was established by the UK’s Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) in 2003. The Scheme is now completing its eighth cohort and there are five further cohorts planned for Australia, West Africa, South-East Asia, South Asia and Europe between now and the end of 2007.

PBAS has become globally recognised as a serious professional training scheme promoting skills and integrity amongst those acting as brokers of cross-sector and multi-stakeholder partnership for sustainable development. Candidates come from all sectors (business, not-for-profit, public sector and civil society) and whilst many are ‘internal’ brokers (working within a partner organisation for the success of the whole partnership) an increasing number are ‘external’ brokers (working as independent consultants or for one of the growing number of not-for-profit intermediary organisations that support and promote partnerships).

Accreditation to PBAS involves completing a one-week intensive residential skills training followed by a three-month period of mentored professional practice. During this professional practice period, candidates are required to keep a journal or ‘logbook’ of their brokering work. In due course this logbook is formally assessed (see http://www.odi.org.uk/pppg/PBAS for more details of this process).

The logbook (defined in the dictionary as ‘a record of a journey’), is intended to promote critical analysis of what brokering skills are required in specific situations and to document learning and progress over time. Above all, it is designed to promote more reflective practice in those operating (and hoping to qualify) as professional partnership brokers.

The learning gained through the process of keeping a logbook is analysed here by four individuals from a selection of different PBAS cohorts that have taken place over the past three years. We trust that these accounts serve to illustrate the value of an increasingly reflective approach to professional partnering practice, to inspire others to reflect with equal rigour on the brokering and/or partnering roles they play and how they might discharge these roles more effectively.

DEVELOPING ‘REFLECTIVE’ PRACTICE

Ros Tennyson and Michael Warner
DEVELOPING ‘REFLECTIVE’ PRACTICE

Capturing Partnership Learning: The value of keeping a record

Sharon Laws

Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in the United Kingdom and Rio Tinto plc. entered into a three year strategic partnership in 2004 with the aim of combining activities at a global level to enhance their contribution to environmental conservation through a jointly planned and managed programme. The partnership, financed by Rio Tinto, forms part of the company’s strategy to be recognised as a world leader in the mining industry by improving environmental management and minimising the detrimental impacts of its operations.

My role as manager of this partnership between a scientific institution and a mining company is a challenging one. Tasks include developing projects with mutual benefits to both parties. These are generally implemented around Rio Tinto Business Units and aim to improve the environmental performance of the company. Advice is also provided around wider strategic issues such as offsets and monitoring and evaluating biodiversity impacts. Regular visits are undertaken to different Business Units globally in collaboration with other conservation organisations; BirdLife International, Earthwatch and Fauna and Flora International, to identify opportunities and technical assistance that can support the implementation of the company’s biodiversity strategy.

The benefits of keeping a logbook

During the three-month mentored practice period of the PBAS course my aim was to encourage the further engagement of existing and new partnerships with the mining sector. I also sought to improve my ability to implement brokering skills through practice and reflection. A requirement was the recording of my weekly experiences as a partnership broker in a logbook. This had both process and outcome benefits for my work.

Process benefits

Setting objectives for each week was a beneficial work discipline that enabled me to focus on the partnership as a whole and use my time more effectively. Writing the logbook also enabled me to take a broader picture of the partnership instead of getting caught up in the detail of the project management activities. This proved important in ensuring that the objectives of the partnership were kept on track. Finally, the logbook captured my thought processes as a broker, some of the challenges encountered and how I tried to tackle these. The learning from this assisted my personal development by enabling me to acknowledge areas of weakness and improve my brokering role.

Outcome benefits

A number of the tools that I developed in the logbook have been beneficial to Kew as the organisation moves forwards to engage with other companies in the future. These included a decision tree to determine ‘what to charge’ companies and a partnership relationship circle showing which organisations Kew engages with, how ‘close’ the relationship is and the commons elements of the various relationships e.g. for those who Kew works with more closely there is typically a partnership agreement, a ‘champion’ and some form of dedicated management.

The logbook acted as a record of the partnership’s development, not only with Rio Tinto but also with the other partners such as Fauna and Flora International, BirdLife International and Earthwatch. Capturing these early learning experiences has been helpful to informing the establishment of other partnerships with companies and drawing out some of the key elements of what makes things
work e.g. ‘champions’, buy-in from the Rio Tinto Business Units and senior management buy-in. The logbook has also served as a useful record to aid formal reporting and tracking of the partnership process and provides a useful information base that will be invaluable for my replacement when I leave this position.

Capturing the learning

Whilst we were given some guidance from the PBAS course organisers, the logbook format was left largely to our discretion. I chose to use coloured boxes to visually capture the main themes that emerged during this time, dividing them into categories such as ‘issues’, ‘thoughts’, ‘what was working well’, ‘unexpected outcomes’ and ‘lessons’. This proved informative as, when collated, they illustrated some key learning points. A selection of these are included below:

**ISSUE**: Lack of awareness within Kew of the additional benefits working with companies can provide.

**ISSUE**: Senior management decision-making necessary when engaging with companies.

**ISSUE**: As Partnership Manager, to what level is it necessary to project manage? Each project has its own project manager but, if activities aren’t progressing, to what extent do I intervene?

**ISSUE**: Initiatives take constant follow up!!

**THOUGHT**: I actually spend far too much time researching – whilst

**ISSUE**: of

this is important in order to be more knowledgeable about the context within which the project fits – I enjoy researching and often get easily side tracked and bogged down in detail.

**THOUGHT**: Core competency mapping would be most valuable if it was based on the activities we have proposed we can engage in and related to geographical area.

**WORKING WELL!** Keeping key people in the loop

**WORKING WELL!** Do more of informal events to build relationships

**WORKING WELL!** Use the telephone rather than email.

**WORKING WELL!** Do more reporting on action points.

**WORKING WELL!** Time out to reflect …. Particularly when you work in beautiful gardens!

**UNEXPECTED OUTCOME**: The Rio Tinto partnership has acted as a catalyst for Kew to work with Flora and Fauna International.

**UNEXPECTED OUTCOME**: The partnership has developed a relationship with Rio Tinto in which we can turn to them for support in issues outside the remit of the partnership.

**LESSON**: Need to improve my ways of communicating on the telephone.

**LESSON**: Senior management buy-in is essential for engagement with others to move forwards.

The key lessons

Recording my weekly reflections was an invaluable learning process both for the partnership and for my role as a broker. It enabled me to clearly extract a number of lessons to personally improve my way of working and to also identify issues (such as the need to raise internal awareness and understanding of the partnership) that needed to be addressed to strengthen the partnership.

At a personal level the importance of communicating effectively was made clear to me; using the phone more than emailing, for example, tends to get better results and develops relationships with individuals more effectively. I also learned that the ability to ‘put oneself in someone else’s shoes’ is critical to understanding the different perspectives of other individuals and organisations. Finally, the need to take time out to stand back, reflect and avoid being swamped by day-to-day activities that may mean losing sight of the bigger picture, is essential.

With regard to the partnership itself, a key lesson was that partnership development and building relationships take time and certain elements (such as champions) are critical. Communicating the partnership, and reasons for partnering, within partner organisations, should be a priority. It is essential to get buy-in and commitment for this so having senior management involvement, with clarity on ‘why’ the organisation is partnering, is vital. This enables the broker to
communicate the value of the partnership internally and to ensure buy-in from staff.

It took some time to get into the discipline of keeping the logbook but setting aside one or two hours a week for this proved to be extremely worthwhile. Given my current travel commitments I have been unable to record experiences at a similar level of detail but, because I am aware of how important this can be, I have continued to capture key learning points from my partnership work in a daily diary.
DEVELOPING ‘REFLECTIVE’ PRACTICE

Beyond a Shared Vision: Building partnerships with the private sector

Renata Pereira

CARE Brazil is the youngest component of the CARE Federation. It was created in 2001 as a Brazilian NGO to fight the underlying causes of poverty in the country by acting as a catalyst for social transformation with local NGOs and the public and private sectors. My work is specifically concerned with private sector partnerships and one of my aims for the PBAS professional practice period was to sign a partnership agreement with a company that has done some excellent conservation work to promote education and income generation strategies that preserve the local fauna and flora in the south of the country. The idea was to share our joint expertise and knowledge and develop similar reforestation and conservation activities in another geographical area. Several months before PBAS I managed to set up a directors meeting between our two organisations to discuss this possibility. The company’s Social Responsibility Director liked the idea of working with us and we agreed to take things further. But the partnership never happened. At the time I was not quite sure why this was so, but keeping a logbook enabled me to think carefully about our approach and how we might have behaved differently.

My first challenge was that I was going to be away for a month’s training after the meeting. Although I explained this to the company and told them I would be in touch when I got back, by the time I returned the momentum for the partnership had been lost. My logbook notes:

I have completed an internal assessment and I have spoken to the Director’s assistant. I told her I would like to re-establish our contact and set up another visit. She said her boss has been travelling for the past month as the company is launching a new social responsibility strategy in all the locations where they have offices and plants. She said she would get back to me when he returns. I asked if I could speak to the Communications and Marketing Coordinator but was told that she was participating in the launching of the programme as well.

This pattern was repeated for many weeks, with me calling or sending e-mails but never being able to establish a proper meeting with the company. I reflected on this as follows:

I have learned that the intensity of my workload and travel can disrupt broker activities. Time management is a key issue and I need to think about how to keep things alive and moving even when my schedule is very busy.

At the same time I began to look at our private sector relationships in more detail in order to understand their history, how they had developed and where they could be improved. This exploration was very illuminating and showed me other reasons why the partnership I was seeking to establish may not be working:

I had not realised how important the following three factors are:
(1) The willingness of the people involved to make this work based on a common and shared vision of what this partnership could represent to Brazil; (2) the importance of relating a partnership to the core business of each organisation; and (3) the capacity of engaging the partners in other matters that do not necessarily relate to the matters of the partnership.

I also realise that CARE Brazil behaves very humbly by approaching companies in saying: “I have a vision; I need your help to achieve that vision.” However, although I felt that we needed to be less humble, I also learned that we should not over-present ourselves or dominate the ‘exploration’ phase. This was
made clear to me in the way that we managed a possible partnership with a company interested in working to capacity-build Brazilian NGOs. I was very enthusiastic about this idea:

I set up a high level meeting in which we presented CARE as a large federation with many different approaches, frameworks and views on poverty. I now see that this was far too overwhelming, particularly as the company was only just starting to understand and learn about the civil society sector. I believe we ‘scared’ them as we presented our organisation as one with too many complicated and programmatic theories and charts … we were not humble enough and should instead have presented ourselves as an organisation seeking their valuable expertise for the achievement of our vision in Brazil. I tried a series of contacts with the company afterwards but I did not hear back from them. I have not given up on this partnership but I have not found the way to approach them again! Maybe we should have listened better and stated things in a simpler and direct way so that we could have established more of a conversation and less of a presentation. We spoke too much and we did not have time to interact with them, not even to find out what their perception was on what we were talking about.

Another piece of learning emerged from investigating why we did not have any kind of written agreement with one of our early key partners:

I have given this fact different explanations: (1) The partnership was so personal and strong and it was established when CARE Brazil was just beginning its work, so the individuals involved did not feel that the signing of an agreement was necessary at that point, (2) CARE Brazil had a very informal approach with its partners at this time; and, (3) this partnership was not institutionalised.

The partnership depended upon the people involved in the establishment of the partnership from both organisations who were very passionate about the partnership and its shared vision. However, to make things happen demands a different set of skills. The people who were there at the beginning of the partnership later left their organisations. I now understand some of the crises we have faced in this partnership and why they have happened. The starting phase of this partnership had a strong personal component but the building and maintenance phases demanded an organisational involvement that did not happen to the same extent.

My reflection and learning from these two different experiences led me to comment in my logbook:

It is more important to listen than to speak and sometimes the overload of information, frameworks and numbers presented may be a sign of lack of confidence. It is always better to leave room for conversation and interaction, especially when we are starting to establish a partnership.

A great shared vision and personal bonding are very important factors in building a partnership. However, it is imperative that the passion of the beginning goes beyond the people involved and become institutionalised by both organisations.

Keeping a logbook enabled me to understand that developing a partnership involves doing things jointly from the start. Our plans for the conservation partnership did not work because both potential partners lost time in following things up and did not say exactly what they wanted. I now know that partners have to be very specific in terms of clearly mapping their needs and looking at the competencies, skills and expertise required so that they can advance together in partnership-building. Time management, careful planning and institutionalising relationships are also necessary to keep things moving when individuals responsible for developing partnerships have other commitments or move on. Most important of all, reflecting on my practice has taught me that proactive and constant follow-up should be part of a partnership broker’s DNA.
A few months before embarking upon the PBAS course in April 2004, I was appointed Project Manager of the Sustainable Livelihoods Project with Shell Gabon. This project was established and designed by the Shell Foundation and Shell Gabon as an innovative approach to promote sustainable livelihoods in Gamba, the company’s base in Gabon. Its approach centred upon the creation of a multi-sector partnership that actively involved other relevant groups to support/fund specific activities and thereby reduce the risk of a ‘dependency culture’ on Shell.

During my PBAS professional practice period I was involved in identifying potential partners for the project and convincing them that taking part in it would enhance their status.

The first hurdle I had to overcome in writing the logbook was to remove from my mind the nagging thought that, given the already busy schedule I had, this was an additional commitment I could do without. My second hurdle centred on overcoming my perception that the logbook was simply the requirement necessary for receiving a course certificate. I was already well-qualified academically and fought to overcome the sense that I was simply wasting valuable time on something that I did not really need – time which I could use more productively running the project.

I decided to discuss my hesitations with my colleagues on the project team. Looking back now, I am convinced that this was a good idea as it set the tone for what became the focus of some important learning for me. I received much encouragement from them and this support, more than anything else, led to my decision to embark upon Part Two of the PBAS course and commit myself to keeping a logbook. I concluded that this was really the first time that I had engaged in a course of study that provided me with an immediate opportunity to put into practice what I had learnt in theory.

Initially, I recorded my log entries in a notebook and then transferred the content to the PC in my office. Writing was not the difficult part. Over the years I had developed the habit of recording my thoughts and experiences on an occasional basis. This practice had no consequences for other people and I was under no obligation to do it. However, keeping a logbook as a duty and sharing it with another person, namely my mentor, was an entirely different experience. My thoughts and reflections were now exposed to someone else and I had to think much harder about what I wrote and how it might be interpreted. Keeping the logbook forced me to be as objective as possible in my analysis of events and in expressing myself concisely. This required considerable discipline and it was not something that came easily to me.

As with many things, the beginning was the most difficult as the temptation was to postpone any logbook keeping until the following day. This was especially so when I arrived home tired in the evening after a hard day’s work. It got easier when I obtained a laptop and mobile office at work. I no longer had to write everything down on paper before transferring it to the computer. Meanwhile my mentor played an important role in helping me review what I had recorded in my logbook so that it reflected the PBAS principles central to the course. He geared me to testing these in the context of my professional activities so that the logbook wasn’t simply a recording of events.

To be more objective in what I recorded, I would, from time to time, discuss events with my colleagues to test their understanding of them before...
writing them up in the logbook. I learned with amazement how common it was for people to interpret the same event differently. I also learned the value of these varied viewpoints and the importance of the wealth of skills and information that we shared as a group. My logbook entries reinforce this:

**DATE: 26th April – Gamba**
The Sustainable Development Team met today to review our stakeholders’ mapping. It was an invaluable exercise for me and I learnt so much from my colleagues about all the different partners we’re involved with nationally, regionally, locally and within our own organisation. I also became more acutely aware of the vast experience and knowledge of my colleagues and the invaluable information system they’ve managed to set up.

Going over my logbook at the end of the practice period, I was struck by the number of details it contained; details I had forgotten over time and that I’m sure I would have lost completely had I not recorded them. Many of these were included as comments in passing or as small references alongside the key issues that I was documenting. As I looked through them I observed that a large number related to the depth and frequency of contact among the Social Development Team and reinforced the strong sense of companionship that we shared. This had been evident in my first entry:

**DATE: 5th April 2004 – Gamba**
Colleagues were keen to find out how the PBAS course went. Today I gave feedback to the core members of the Sustainable Development Team. We have developed a very good team spirit with a lot of support for each other. This team spirit means that issues are easily discussed among us and solutions found quickly.

The strong rapport grew further over the professional practice period and facilitated the development of our external partnership connections. Different chronological entries from the period covered in the logbook document this process, beginning with the early stages when open communication and participation of all team members in the project was established.

**DATE: 19th April – Gamba**
I’m making a presentation to the Management Team in two days time on the status of the project. Although I’m the one who will be making the presentation as the manager and coordinator of the Sustainable Livelihoods Project, it is very much a team effort. The purpose of the meeting today was to invite each member of the Sustainable Development Team to make his/her contribution and give them a sense of ownership of the project. Since becoming part of the team I’ve been impressed by the support my colleagues have given me in terms of availability and positive suggestions. The meeting went very well.

As our work developed, team support and backing became something that I grew to rely upon:

**DATE: 18th May – Gamba**
Being a new member of the team I find my colleagues totally supportive and real professionals. I’ve managed to learn a lot from them. My role as internal broker has been much facilitated by their attitude. And my relationship with external partners has also been working largely as a result of the credibility of my colleagues within the company.

Our approach was refined to include regular briefings and reviews of progress in our work:

**DATE: 1st July – Gamba**
The Sustainable Development Team met this afternoon for a post-implementation review of yesterday’s big meeting. This is a procedure that our team has adopted to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our organisation.

A final entry describes a meeting between all our partners and two key government Ministers and emphasises the sense of achievement felt by the team at arriving at this stage after all the time and energy they had put into the project.

My logbook showed me how the work that I was doing both promoted and monitored the growth of our team spirit. Picking up on this information from the smaller details that I had documented during the PBAS professional practice enabled me to more deeply appreciate this strong working connection that is so central to my partnership-building efforts.
To look is one thing.  
To see what you look at is another.  
To understand what you see is a third.  
To learn from what you understand is still something else.  
But to act on what you learn is all that really matters.

The more I have been involved in partnership building, the more questions I ask and the more like-minded people I look for. Through PBAS I was able to learn with a group of supportive people who helped me to find answers but also encouraged me to continue to pose questions. Keeping a logbook was a central part of this process.

I was working as a Sustainable Development Specialist for an oil and gas company in Russia at the time I took the course. My role was that of an internal broker. It was a very interesting and challenging time for us as the company had recently created a Sustainable Development Council. We had developed the internal procedures for this and were looking for ways of cooperating with external parties such as governmental bodies, NGOs and business organisations.

My position meant that I was involved in the implementation of many social projects, some of which were established as partnerships. For this reason my attendance on the PBAS course was both timely and practical.

The requirement to write the logbook during the professional practice period felt very familiar to me as I, like many girls, used to keep a diary. At first I tried to write something every day but soon realised that this just did not work for me. Some days the situation changed so quickly that there was no time to write down all the events that happened and on other days it seemed that nothing happened at all. In the end I chose to update the logbook on a weekly basis.

On a very practical level, keeping a logbook during my PBAS professional practice period actually made time-management easier and helped me to better address matters such as meeting preparation and management. For much of the time, however, I was simply ‘fulfilling the requirements’ of the course, including all the things related to the brokering process I was engaged in, but not quite grasping why this should be done.

I understood this much later, almost six months after I had received my PBAS accreditation. One of the partnerships that I had included in my logbook did not develop the way we expected. Actually, it did not develop at all. It became stuck at the exploration stage and there was no sign that the situation would change in the near future. Most of the parties involved asserted that they were dissatisfied with this slow speed but felt it was due to what they described as “natural causes”; the time required for data collection, legal obstacles, etc. I felt that something should be done to push the project forward.

However, before taking any steps, I decided to analyse the process from the very beginning to see if I could find out what might have been done wrong and ascertain whether things could be done differently. So I re-read my logbook.

We had started, I observed, with mixed enthusiasm for the idea of the partnership. Some potential partners were keen on the idea of the partnership but I noted that, “The reaction may be positive but it absolutely does not mean that people will actually perform any actions.” Others were more sceptical and did not seem to fully grasp what a partnership approach might contain. As the project developed there were differences in approach that were sometimes difficult to address but, in spite of this, I observed that, “...we did not have any problems in communicating –
both sides respected each other’s points of view.”

Communication was promoted through regular meetings between the partners and a focus on the project’s beneficiaries. This was important in encouraging a responsible attitude. One of my logbook entries states, “The meeting was calm and peaceful, the attitude towards the project is positive, everybody realises that it’s important and means a lot for the local people.” Although not all meetings were as smooth as this one I felt, as time went on, that:

…people realise the importance of the project for the local people and are discussing different ways of its implementation. At the same time everybody understands that other parties have “their reasons” for behaving as they do – I believe we’ll do well.

When I had finished reviewing the logbook I realised that, although I could not say that all our actions were perfect and that nothing more could have been done, our general strategy seemed correct. More importantly, in spite of the fact that the project had not developed, the partnership itself had. Trust between the partners was being built by working together and the evolution of the partnership had changed from a project-based focus to one with a wider local scope.

This experience showed me how important writing the logbook had been. It had provided me with a useful record of what had happened in my work and I could see how relationships and ideas had grown and developed. The discipline of organising my thoughts on paper had enabled me to pick out things that I would otherwise not have noticed. I could see issues and challenges from different angles and I could share these new findings with my colleagues and develop an action plan with them for the way forward.

I also understood that the most interesting learning of all is often unexpected.
Cross-sector partnerships are most commonly created as a direct response to a specific development challenge. Typically, they are initiated and driven, at least in the early stages, by one organisation, with other agencies (partners) brought in to provide additional expertise, funds networks and other resources. Outputs from such ‘problem-solving’ partnerships are usually pre-determined, with success measured primarily in terms of how effectively they have dealt with the challenge. The more complex the partnership, the more likely it is that a level of partnership ‘brokering’ will be necessary – whether this is unconscious (one or more individuals undertaking brokering functions intuitively) or conscious (one or more individuals being allocated brokering tasks by the partners). As a partnership becomes more firmly established, the role of partnership broker may be re-constructed as something closer to a partnership manager.

But there is a quite different way of mobilising cross-sector partnerships – one that is more exploratory in approach and more open-ended in terms of outcomes. The focus is not on problem-solving, but rather on identifying and defining problems. In such partnerships, the professional intervention of a broker is less about brokering relationships and more about brokering the partnering idea. The underlying intentions can be seen as threefold:

- To build partnering approaches and competencies that strengthen the capacity of each sector to fulfil its primary function more effectively and accountably;
- To promote a more ‘enabling environment’ in which cross-sector sustainable development solutions become the norm rather than exception; and,  
- To position the partnership approach as a culture that challenges the ‘business-as-usual’ approach and seeks to formulate alternative and more effective ways of achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability.

A brief case study from Poland aims to illustrate the power and the potential of brokering the idea of cross-sector partnering for sustainable development.  

**Building a culture of partnering in Krakow, Poland**

The programme was initiated by two not-for-profit organisations working to engage business in sustainable development; the UK-based International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) and the Krakow-based Progress and Business Foundation (PBF). The IBLF, through its representative Ros Tennyson, operated in the capacity of ‘external broker’, with an outside temporary relationship to the project, while PBF, through Rafal Serafin, worked as an ‘internal broker’, engaged in an on-going relationship with key players. These different brokering perspectives are captured in their commentaries on a one-day cross-sector event that had long-term repercussions for the city of Krakow.

**Context**

In 1993, Poland was going through a time of enormous change following the collapse of communist rule in 1989. The newly elected government introduced radical reforms aimed at promoting a market economy, the rule of law and democracy. It sought to initiate privatisation and encourage small business development while creating structures for local and regional government, the emergence of an independent media and the growth of civil society. While this was clearly a time of opportunity and excitement, for many it was also one of anxiety and confusion.
The challenge

Sustainable development efforts at this time were mostly tentative and fragmented. Seeing Krakow and the surrounding region as a microcosm of the challenges facing Poland, the two partner organisations identified the key challenges as:

- Dealing with government, business and civil society confusion as to their roles and responsibilities;
- The lack of experience of key sector leaders to operate confidently in their new roles;
- Ascertaining how local level benefits could be generated from national reforms; and
- An apparent disinclination for cross-sector collaboration.

The response

A commitment to ensuring that national reforms would benefit Krakow was evidenced in early meetings with different local sector leaders. It was clear, however, that they were not working together and were largely unaware of each other’s initiatives and activities. In response, a dynamic one-day event was organised which would, for the first time, propose the idea of cross-sector collaboration to build a holistic and integrated approach for the sustainable development of the city.

For a range of reasons people were intrigued enough to attend. This may have been due to excitement at the prospect of a new approach to meet their concerns, the idea that an international organisation was taking an active interest in their city, the opportunity to air their views to those they did not usually meet, or to a mixture of these. What was intriguing was that, in a climate of scepticism about the ‘quick fixes’ presented since the collapse of communism, the partnering idea seemed to have genuine appeal, probably because it was practical and about building ‘home-grown’ solutions. In any case, one hundred people came.

Event Design

GETTING STARTED

Participants arrived anxious, curious and cautiously optimistic. At the first session we divided the group into their different sectors (business, civil society, academia and public sector) to enable them to build strong pictures of their sector’s strengths and weaknesses. This was followed by a frank discussion about their views of the other sectors and an exploration of the potential benefits of working collaboratively with them.

BUILDING SECTOR IDENTITY

The plenary that followed involved detailed feedback from each group in turn. Here each sector was able to position itself by describing its values, priorities and contribution to society as well as acknowledging areas where it had less knowledge or competence. As the picture unfolded (especially when each sector fed back its attitudes on the others), there were moments of drama, antagonism and humour. But, above all, there was a palpable attentiveness among all present and a growing sense of engagement and insight.

RT: This was a high-risk strategy. The PBF staff team were very nervous about the proposed design. They feared that latent hostilities between the sectors would be exacerbated and, of course, I understood that their personal and organisational reputations were on the line. I was torn between respecting their anxiety about how they would manage if things didn’t go according to plan and feeling intuitively that this was an opportunity to cut through to something quite new that should not be missed.

In the end I persuaded them to take the risk by promising to rescue the situation if necessary – though this decision also gave me a sleepless night!

RS: Through the sector-based working groups we provided a framework for participants which they recognised as being safe. In this atmosphere, they were able to quickly establish a sense of common values and attitudes. The approach helped consolidate a self-recognition of operating ‘robustly’, even when their sector was in the process of being redefined.

The comfort factor was crucial. The situation would have been different had we gone into plenary at the start as people would have clammed up.
The morning session ended by playing back what had been revealed. The conclusion (obvious to all as they had watched it emerge) was that one sector’s strengths complemented another sector’s limitations. This led quite naturally to an understanding that collaborative development solutions, built on the unique contributions of each sector, were far more likely to be both appropriate and sustainable.

When asked what principles would need to be in place to make it possible for those present to contemplate cross-sectoral working, the group agreed that these were equity, transparency and mutual benefit.

At lunch participants were encouraged to sit next to people from another sector. The noise of animated conversation was almost deafening!

In the afternoon there was a brief presentation from an external guest speaker who described his experiences of creating tri-sector partnerships for city regeneration, social inclusion and sustainable economic growth.

Everyone listened. They seemed to be ready for a session on how cross-sector collaboration actually worked. Their questions to the speaker were both focussed and practical. A lively exchange took place.

To our surprise it seemed that several of the lunch time conversations had already led to initial project ideas:

- a packaging company working with university students and a green NGO for a city-wide campaign to reduce waste;
- an environmental education initiative for school children between teachers and local park programme staff;
- a ‘Technopark’ project between business, the University and the city authorities, building on Krakow’s potential as an IT centre and attracting inward investment;
- Notions of equity, solidarity, transparency, mutual benefit and co-operation had been widely presented in Poland as important principles for guiding reforms. Yet, for many, these ideas seemed too abstract or irrelevant to the day-to-day reality of institutional working. The key to the success of the morning session was that such abstract ideas were made practical.

Principles were applied to the actual experiences and views of the workshop participants.

Listening to the different interpretations of such terms from distinct sectoral perspectives was enlightening for everyone.

As far as I could see, no one in the room felt inclined to copy the case study per se, but everyone felt inspired enough by the innovation and courage revealed by the story to feel that it was quite realistic to have a go at creating their own version.

We had not anticipated that there would be so many project ideas forthcoming.

However, we quickly adapted what we had planned and began to list the ideas and the commitments made to ensure we would be able to follow them up.

It also became apparent that some form of structure would be needed to transform this deluge of exciting proposals into tangible projects.

Other partners and further resources would also need to be secured...

The ideas would need to be aligned with the development plans and ambitions of the City Authorities...
ACTION PLANNING continued

• a careers advisory service set up by local businesses and the University...and so on.

Within 30 minutes, 15 collaborative projects had been suggested, each involving two or more sectors and directly contributing to the ‘Sustainable Krakow’ theme.

SECURING FOLLOW-UP

As the facilitators began to move to the ‘thank you’ slot, the Mayor (who had been an active participant throughout) said that as this had been such a successful day, he would very much like to encourage the group to meet again in a cross-sector format to maintain the momentum that had been engendered.

There was eager agreement and the idea for the Krakow Development Forum (KDF) was born.

RS: As an ‘internal’ broker, I was in the frontline throughout the day. One of the key lessons for me was that however well you prepare, you must always be ready to adapt to changing circumstances. During the course of the day, several new leaders emerged and it was vital to give way and provide them an opportunity to lead.

RT: I learned many lessons from this day. It was truly remarkable how much was achieved! We had done our homework, prepared well and the day itself was brilliantly facilitated by the PBF team.

We imagined prior to the event that, if things went well, it was probable that some sort of support structure would be required as follow-up. In fact, it was the Mayor who proposed that structure, we simply created the conditions for this to happen.

As an external broker, my role was largely in the background. At the event I saw myself as having three main functions: firstly, to provide support to PBF behind the scenes; secondly, being ready to step in at a moment’s notice if necessary and, finally, to use the added value of being ‘external’ to the situation to ask provocative questions, reflect back to the internal broker on group dynamics or refer to examples from elsewhere.

What happened next?

Within a few months, KDF was formally established as a non-profit association for the building of cross-sector partnerships that would, “…bring social, economic, environmental and cultural benefit to the Krakow community and its regional, national and international context.” Set up to identify and respond to opportunities and problems with the resources and competencies of its members, the KDF was designed to enable and promote collaborative work rather than engage in project implementation itself.

Financing was obtained through a modest fee that affirmed individual commitment to the KDF idea. The initiating group comprised 26 individuals from different sectors with institutional support from the City Government, the IBLF and six companies. A management committee of five cross-sector nominees was accountable to a wide-ranging membership including the Mayor and other
civic and business leaders alongside teachers, activists, students and artists.

By 1996, the KDF had a membership of 88 individuals from all key sectors in Krakow and 21 supporting members. Most of the projects identified in the first workshop were subsequently implemented and many more were generated. Among the most significant were:

- **Revitalising Kazimierz** (the former Jewish district where thousands were deported and died in Nazi concentration camps leaving the neighbourhood derelict and desolate). A Community Development Association was established and a revitalisation plan formulated with input from the cities of Berlin and Edinburgh.

- **Revitalising Nowa Huta** (the industrial district of Krakow, dominated by the former Lenin Steel Works). A community-based revitalisation plan was developed with the Steel Works’ management as it dealt with the challenges of restructuring and a Forum for Nowa Huta provided a lobby for this little known part of Krakow.

- **Opportunities for Youth** – a Careers Advisory Centre for graduates was established in partnership with local businesses. This prompted Krakow’s universities to seek further private sector links, including the re-designing of course curricula for the job market.

- **Jagellonian University III Campus** – Poland’s oldest and most prestigious university, drawing upon a combination of state funding and foreign investment, sought to build a new campus linked with a technology park which became a flagship for Krakow.

- **Schools for Sustainable Development** – Links between schools, national parks and other protected areas around Krakow were generated between Ojcow National Park and the Peak District National Park in the UK. School exchange visits led to the development of a nationwide environmental education programme which continues today.

The KDF was designed as a temporary partnership with the objective of strengthening the roles and responsibilities of the three sectors in contributing to the sustainable development of Krakow. In 1998 it was decided that, because the projects initiated through the KDF had taken on a dynamic of their own and working in partnership had become second nature to its members, this brokering role was no longer needed and the KDF was disbanded.

**Outcomes**

Thirteen years have passed since the events described above. Poland is now a member of the European Union and Krakow has become a favourite tourist destination. The city has adopted a development plan which includes many of the priorities and ideas identified by the KDF and there is a strong culture of cross-sector working in the city. Several founding KDF members have gone on to become government ministers whilst others have become national leaders in the NGO and business sectors. The KDF has also served as a role model for a new type of delivery mechanism that has been adopted by other cities in Poland and beyond. If we accept that the aim of the KDF project was to **broker the idea of sustainable development partnerships**, it was entirely successful. The fact that it no longer exists is immaterial.

The KDF story shows how a single well-designed, well-timed and well-managed workshop can transform working relationships and lead to quite unexpected levels of innovation and enthusiasm in just one day. Brokering the idea of partnering can be the first step on an exciting journey. But it is not a ‘soft’ technology – it involves rigour, responsiveness, risk and responsibility from those involved in the brokering process. Above all, it requires the professional discipline to ‘let go’ once the idea has been successfully brokered and resist the temptation of going on forever.

**NOTES**

1 This workshop design is described more fully in The Brokering Guidebook: Navigating effective sustainable development partnerships, The Partnering Initiative, 2005. Available from: www.ThePartneringInitiative.org
LEADING EDGE PRACTICE

Removing Barriers to Effective Partnerships: A risk management tool

Julie Mundy

All relationships and businesses have inherent risk. Risk is anything which will prevent an organisation (or partnership) from achieving its mission or objective. Taking risk is an important element of the corporate world and can allow growth and innovation as long as it is understood and managed. Risk taking in international development, while not always desirable, is inevitable. Risk arises from uncertainty and operating in often rapidly changing and unstructured environments. Partnerships in the developing world are by their very nature risky. Yet risk has been very successfully managed in developing country conflict and emergency contexts by international agencies for many years, often through highly effective partnerships, e.g. the Red Cross and the UN working with governments, NGOs and private firms to address pressing humanitarian needs during disasters and conflict.

The risks involved in development partnerships may be mitigated or reduced by the very convergence of partnerships, through sharing of risk. Indeed, along with the multiplier effect of pooling resources and working together to achieve shared benefits which may not have been secured by individual parties, this is one of the very attractive aspects of multi-sectoral partnerships for development. Effective risk management need not be a complex, time consuming or empty activity in the development of a partnership. It can greatly assist the removal of barriers and pitfalls which might otherwise prevent the partnership achieving its objectives by promoting:

- Greater openness and transparency through shared understanding of the constraints facing both the partnership as a whole and the individual partners
- Greater chance of achieving partnership objectives through identification, discussion and management of risks
- Improved opportunities for achievement of the partnership objective
- Enhanced likelihood of the partnership itself being sustainable through systematic examination and management of barriers and opportunities
- Fewer costly or unwelcome surprises in the course of the partnership by preventing what is undesirable from occurring.

This paper proposes an adaptation of business risk management processes’ to the partnership process. Such processes will be familiar and reassuring to the many corporates wanting to be involved in partnerships. They have also been successfully implemented in the international development arena by a major health NGO. If all partners are involved in discussion around them, they offer the added benefit of promoting effective team-building with a tool that should take no longer than a day to work through. At the same time they can help to facilitate further partnership negotiations by identifying underlying interests and concerns.

Risk management

Risk management is the culture, processes and structure which can come together to optimise the management of potential opportunities and adverse effects. The objectives of risk management are to:

- Understand and manage partnership risk effectively
- Institutionalise the management of risk within the partnership
• Enable partners to make informed decisions about their participation in the partnership through an awareness of both its opportunities and risks.

• Provide a simple, internationally accepted technique to document risk management.

Figure 1 below shows how, rather than simply working to eliminate it, there are different ways of dealing with risk.

FIGURE 1: Ways of managing risk

The Principles of Risk Management

Underlying risk management are some key assumptions:

• Individual partners will take on a level of risk in line with their ‘appetite’ for risk – commercial and even development successes often result from successful risk-taking, the aim is to manage and control risk appropriately, NOT eliminate it.

• Fostering a partnership culture – given the environment in which many development partnerships exist, which accepts risk is fundamental to the partnership, particularly where the partnership is aiming to be pioneering and innovative, but appreciates that risk identification and control are indispensable for the continuing strength of the partnership (and in some cases securing donor funding and government support).

• A commitment to institutionalisation and standardisation – a common approach to risk management and reporting is adopted to promote consistency and shared understanding in the managing, monitoring and reporting of risk leading to greater transparency and accountability within the partnership.

• A willingness by all parties to assume ownership for risk – ultimate responsibility for the management of risk lies with the partnership.

• Incorporating a Risk Management statement into the Partnership Agreement which reflects the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners.

• Completing a Risk Matrix and Risk Register, which can also form an attachment to the Partnership Agreement.

• Providing an executive summary to the partnership decision makers, highlighting extreme/high risks and Control Implementation Plans.

• Reassessing risks and Control Improvement Plans on an annual basis, as part of Partnership Maintenance Cycle.

A Risk Management Process for Partnerships

The model outlined below is adapted from that recommended in the Australian/New Zealand Standards (AS/NZ4360:1999) and modified to meet partnership, not-for-profit and developing country circumstances. It is suggested that it may be applied at distinct stages of a partnership’s life-cycle; during partnership exploration, building and maintenance.

Step 1: Risk assessment

The objective at this stage is to identify risks to the partnership and then analyse them by distinguishing between major risks and minor acceptable risks. This will help the partnership to prioritise the risks and focus energies on those most critical. Risks can be grouped into
categories appropriate to the partnership. For example, NGOs or donors may choose to look at:

- People
- Place
- Property
- Political environment
- Goodwill (reputation)
- Finance/Revenue

The Australian Standards on which the proposed model is based suggests the following five key categories of risk:

- Strategic (including reputational)
- Operational
- Legal
- Financial
- Political and cultural factors

Identification of risks in each area requires the use of judgement, assumptions and in many cases, institutional knowledge and experience of the various organisations and their operating environment. This can be done in a fairly short brainstorming session, either using the category headings outlined above as prompts, or in a more free flowing manner with risks later grouped into categories.

Once risks are identified, estimates of likelihood (of the risk occurring) and consequences (what will happen if it does occur) are made. This is a critical step which assists in prioritising the risks, as they impact on the partners and ensures that valuable time is not wasted on a seemingly endless litany of minor risks of little consequence which are unlikely to occur. From this discussion, a prioritised list of risks is generated. The partnership can then decide if the risks are acceptable in light of existing ‘controls’, or need to be ‘managed’.

Step 2: Evaluate the risks

To evaluate the significance of risk two factors are considered:

- The Likelihood that the risk may occur
- The Consequence the risk would have for the partnership if the risk were to occur

To make it easier for everyone to have a shared way of evaluating the risks, common definitions should be agreed with partners which objectively outline the likelihood of the risks occurring in a quantitative way, as in Table 1. This shared understanding usually leads to increased consensus.

**TABLE 1: Likelihood Ratings Definitions (example)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Almost certain</td>
<td>It is expected to occur in most circumstances Risk will occur within the next 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Will probably occur in most circumstances Risk has a 50-74% chance of occurring Risk will occur within 18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Risk might occur at some time Risk has 25-49% chance of occurring Risk will occur within 36 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>Risk might occur at some time Risk has 25-49% chance of occurring Risk will occur within 36 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Risk might occur at some time Not likely to occur in the next 5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same is true for developing a set of definitions for each partnership being assessed, which defines the seriousness of the risks:
Step 3: Prioritise the risks
(Develop Risk Profile)

Once the risks have been identified and evaluated, they can be simply plotted onto a risk profile. This is a simple and visually striking tool to help partners quickly identify priority areas of attention (see Figure 2).

For example, a financial risk (F1) identified for a partnership may be that funding for the initiative is to run out in six months. The partnership may assess the likelihood of the risk being ‘Almost Certain’ and the consequences ‘Major’. Plotting this onto the risk profile immediately highlights this as an ‘Extreme’ risk and so worthy of attention. On the other hand, a political/cultural risk (P1), that the sexual health services being provided by the partnership clinic may offend local clergy, may have a likelihood ranking of ‘Possible’, but a consequence rating of ‘Low’ (if the clergy is not particularly influential in the community served, for example), so this risk would be ranked as only a ‘Moderate’, and so on.

Once all identified risks have been plotted on the profile, the partnership has a very clear understanding of where it needs to focus its attention, for the next step.

Step 4: Manage the risks
(Management strategies approved and implemented)

The next stage is to focus on those risks the partnership has assessed as being High or Extreme, and to decide whether or not the existing control strategies are adequate or need improvement. If they need improvement, then the partners...
agree a control plan and assign responsibility for this. Controls and management strategies identified to manage risk should be assessed according to the following measurements:

**Over**
The cost of the control exceeds the likely cost of the risk.
The control is duplicated such that one or more of the controls do not reduce the risk exposure.

**Adequate**
The control provides reasonable assurance that the risk event will not occur.

**Requires Improvement**
The control in place does not provide assurance that the risk will not occur.

*There is a need to review the current controls/processes in place to manage the risk.*

If the controls are assessed as 'Requires Improvement' a 'Control Improvement Strategy' should be agreed and documented. The Control Improvement Strategy will depend on the 'Risk Appetite' of the partnership.

With this information, the building blocks to fill in what is called a Risk Matrix, or Risk Register, can be made. Ideally, this is a simple table which is used throughout the process to document what has been discussed and agreed. It provides all the information required in one easy glance and can be simply attached to the Partnership Agreement (see example provided in Table 3 below).

It is important that the extreme and high risks and suggested controls are approved by the decision makers of all members of the partnership.

**Step 5: Monitor and Review**
As with any management tool, the Risk Management process becomes irrelevant if it is not monitored regularly. This does not need to be a time consuming process and can be incorporated into annual Partnership Monitoring, though in the event of a rapidly changing situation i.e. a natural disaster, coup, withdrawal of one partner etc., the risk process can be used as a management tool as and when required. Figure 3 presents a simple and visual report of a review of the partnership risks. Attached to the updated Risk Matrix, the document presents a clear, concise and current analysis of the risk associated with the partnership.

### TABLE 3: Risk Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Risk rating: Likelihood</th>
<th>Risk rating: Consequence</th>
<th>Overall risk rating</th>
<th>Control quality</th>
<th>Control improvement plan</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial F1</td>
<td>Funding will run out in 6 months</td>
<td>Have submitted request for more funding to same donor</td>
<td>Almost certain</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
<td>Needs improvement</td>
<td>1. Submit proposal to government and other funders, review costs 2. Obtain free medical supplies 3. Provide free rent for clinic</td>
<td>1. NGO 2. Company 3. Community/ Gov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural/ Political P1</td>
<td>Local clergy offended by our project activities</td>
<td>Meet clergy once a month to inform him of activities</td>
<td>Probable</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political P2</td>
<td>Local elections may disrupt service provision</td>
<td>Planning to close clinic for election week</td>
<td>Almost certain</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Needs improvement</td>
<td>1. Hire security staff to protect property. 2. Ensure Ante natal check ups held at alternate location</td>
<td>1. Company 2. NGO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Conclusion

This paper has attempted to outline the arguments for institutionalising risk management into the partnering process. As multi-sectoral partnerships become more commonplace, so they become more sophisticated, with increased responsibilities and remit, and a concurrent increase in the need for transparency, good governance and accountability. Moves in the aid sector are already underway to bring development activities in line with commercial activities in terms of attention to risk issues. Proactively adopting a straightforward risk management approach and process will enable partnerships to provide long term solutions, and enhance, not restrict, the ability of partnerships to pursue innovative, flexible responses to some of our world’s most challenging social issues.

### FIGURE 3: Review of Partnership Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of review: (e.g. Jan 2007; Year 2 of project cycle)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political/Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Symbols**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk rating</th>
<th>Trend*</th>
<th>Action status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Risk</td>
<td>risk likely to reduce</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>risk likely to stay the same</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>risk likely to increase</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>risk likely to significantly increase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* ↑ = risk increasing; → = risk remains constant; ↓ = risk decreasing

The processes described in this paper are adapted from the Australian/New Zealand Risk Standards (AS/NZ4360:1999).

A ‘slimmed-down’ process may be more appropriate for smaller, less complex partnerships.

There is a misconception that risk management = not taking risks and stifling innovation. This is not the case and would be quite contrary to the spirit of multi-sectoral partnerships which by their nature are often created to enable innovation and operate ‘outside the box’.

The model does assume a good level of literacy and the ability to conceptualise. It may be appropriate when partnerships include non-literate community representatives, for example, to use a simpler framework though it is still important that the five main categories of risk (strategic, operational, legal, financial, political/cultural) are identified.

When exploring partnerships the tool may be useful in identifying potential partners. Major hurdles such as inconsistent organisational cultures or lack of capacity can be addressed and, after selection, a risk workshop conducted with all partners while designing parameters. This would logically flow from mapping the resources and competencies of the partnership. When building partnerships it can be employed as part of the negotiation of the Partnering Agreement; and when maintaining partnerships it should be monitored and reviewed regularly, particularly in partnerships operating in rapidly changing environments.

Goodwill is particularly important for the not-for-profit sector as involvement in a partnership which may put at risk their reputation and standing with local communities, governments, regimes or donors must be carefully considered.

I have found the less structured approach works better with less experienced stakeholders.
LEADING EDGE PRACTICE

A Delicious Way to Do Business: Commercial and ethical success through a cocoa fair trade partnership

Jacqui MacDonald

Agriculture in many African countries is still determined by exports to the rest of the world, often in commodities such as coffee, sugar and cocoa, which have volatile prices. West Africa has been the centre of world cocoa for the last 70 years and cocoa is crucial for the region’s economies. In Ghana cocoa revenue accounts for about a third of the country’s export earnings. However, although cocoa farmers are the backbone of the economy they are, in most cases, still very poor.

In the independent chocolate sector a few small niche or specialist brands survive on their credentials and unique qualities. Fair trade and organic certification have given some of them new life, but trading directly with farmers can be labour-intensive and may require active developmental assistance or, at least, relationship and/or partnership-building. None of these characteristics have, to date, been of much interest to the larger multinationals.

These facts informed the thinking behind a cocoa fair trade partnership that was set up in 1997. The partners included:

Kuapa Kokoo Limited (“Good Cocoa Farmers” in the local Twi language), part of a farmer co-operative established in 1993 to collect and sell its own cocoa for the benefit of its members. As Ghana embarked upon the liberalisation of its cocoa market, the company saw an opportunity for increasing sales on the international market.

Twin, a registered UK charity, and Twin Trading, a company limited by guarantee, were committed to expanding their work with Kuapa Kokoo. Following their experience of developing the coffee brand, Café Direct, they felt that the time was right to launch a fair trade chocolate bar on the UK market.

DFID, the UK’s Department for International Development, supported Kuapa Kokoo’s development by funding Twin’s work with them. They were interested in increasing their development impact with cocoa farmers in West Africa.

Comic Relief had a history of supporting Kuapa Kokoo and funded much of Twin’s work in Ghana. Supported by leading comedians who participated in a biannual ‘Red Nose Day’ TV event, Comic Relief had incredible brand awareness in the UK with access to celebrities for endorsements and to private funders for a fair trade venture.

Christian Aid had well-established access to community networks together with 200,000 committed supporters and a history of campaigning on fair trade issues.

The Body Shop was already buying cocoa butter on fair trade terms from Kuapa Kokoo through its Community Trade Programme and was keen to support other ways for farmers to benefit from access to international markets.

Building an alliance was more difficult than we first thought. Although there was excitement at the idea and individuals were keen to find ways to bring their organisations on board, we were asking partners to do things that were not within the usual scope of their work. For instance, charities do not usually invest in trade; DFID does not fund a brand in the UK; cocoa farmers normally would not risk their money on a venture in another country when the needs at home are so great, and a skin and hair care retailer whose business is not chocolate would not normally get involved in such a project.

To make progress we focussed on launching the new chocolate bar. This meant finding a chocolate manufacturer, designing a label, testing potential products on the market and building support.
Twin had already decided that they would form a trading company with the name Day Chocolate (named after one of Kuapa Kokoo’s early UK advisers, Richard Day, who died suddenly in 1996). The early market exploration for the project was thus carried out by Twin Trading with additional partners brought in to reach consumers, the media and activists in the UK.

In October 1998 The Day Chocolate Company was founded. The overall strategic aim of the new company was to improve the livelihood of smallholder cocoa producers in West Africa by establishing their own dynamic proposition in the UK chocolate market, thus putting them higher up the value chain. Not only would they benefit from growing the cocoa beans, they would also benefit from sales of the final product(s) made from the beans. To achieve this mission a set of clear intermediate objectives were agreed:

• To take a good quality and affordable range of fair trade chocolate into the UK mainstream market

• To pay a fair trade price for all the cocoa used in the chocolate sold

• To raise awareness of fair trade issues among UK retailers and consumers of all age ranges

• To be highly visible and vocal in the chocolate sector and thereby act as a catalyst for change.

Formalising commitment to the partnership was mostly done in small meetings with each of the partners. Larger meetings were held to keep the momentum going, with reports on progress in product development and market research. This two-year process took more time than anticipated but as each organisation examined its reasons for participating, commitment to the partnership grew. Three of the partners became formal shareholders in the Day Chocolate Company with Twin Trading holding 52 per cent shares, Kuapa Kokoo 33 per cent and The Body Shop 14 per cent. The international development charities and DFID could not be formal owners of a trading company but were able to support the new enterprise in other ways.

The Day Chocolate Company has continued to operate on a set of principles which include:

• **A fair cocoa bean price:** respecting the needs of farmers for a remunerative cocoa bean price it uses cocoa purchased from Kuapa Kokoo under terms established by the international fair trade certification movements for cocoa trading.

• **Profit sharing and equity:** recognising the ‘devaluation’ of the raw material and ‘invisibility’ of cocoa farmers, it is structured so that Kuapa Kokoo have one third of its equity, two seats on the Board of Directors and active participation in decision making. As owners and shareholders, Kuapa Kokoo farmers share in profits of all chocolate sold.

• **Social investment:** a small levy on each of the products – Divine and Dubble bars – is returned to Kuapa Kokoo to continue its work of awareness raising, new projects and training.

• **Visibility:** central to the public marketing of the chocolate products is the cultural identity of the cocoa farmers in Kuapa Kokoo villages. Via the company they actively join in promotions, networks and production of educational materials. The company focuses on representing and communicating positively the farmers’ interests, way of life and aspirations.

Through much hard work each partner has benefited from participation in this partnership. Kuapa Kokoo farmers have gained access to the global market through a joint venture company, buying shares and earning their place in the market in a dignified and sustainable manner. Increased income for farmers has assisted community development such as the building of wells and schools, youth camps and scholarships for higher education. DFID, by requesting a loan guarantee to support banking facilities in the UK for the Day Chocolate Company, has benefited from significant internal learning. The project created an unprecedented level of co-operation across departments in a ‘joined up’ and holistic project, with final sign off coming from the Ministry of Finance of the Government of Ghana. Twin and Twin Trading have gained reputational benefits
and further funding for their work while Comic Relief and Christian Aid have been able to fulfil their mission to alleviate poverty. The partnership has also enabled supporters to campaign for fair trade chocolate and play a greater role than simply giving a donation. The fair trade mandate of The Body Shop’s Community Trade Programme included assisting farmers and artisans to expand their fair trade sales. The partnership has also been popular with staff and given them another way to market The Body Shop’s cocoa products.

Individuals working in the partnership have also learned about the process of partnering. Some of the lessons include:

- It took more time than planned to get the institutional buy-in that we needed.
- In order to maintain momentum and take advantage of the good will generated, we planned the product launch without all the necessary funds. Such creativity was essential to the partnership during this period.
- We were able to rely on each other to sell the partnership internally. For instance, to help facilitate meetings, to give presentations and to have one-to-one discussions with decision makers.
- In the early years the pressure was to make the company a success and everyone pitched in to make this happen. Now that the company is successful the key is to maintain interest.
- Maintenance and further development involve recruiting new partners as and when needed. This has been done to some extent with the Co-operative Group in the UK, Conservation International and SERRV International in the USA.

Kuapa Kokoo has grown to a co-operative of 47,000 farmer members from 1,200 villages across Ghana. It sells around one per cent of the world’s cocoa. Building the organisation on co-operative principles, where there is accountability, transparency and democracy, as well as the firm foundation of reliable income and premiums, has meant Kuapa Kokoo today sets an example of what is possible for smallholder farmers in developing countries. With the added benefit of having a significant share of The Day Chocolate Company, Kuapa Kokoo now has a ‘place at the table’ in world cocoa trading.

The Day Chocolate Company in the UK has been an amazing success in a highly competitive market. From one 150 gram Milk Chocolate bar in 1998, the Divine brand has grown to 15 different lines available in all major supermarkets. In the last year alone, Day Chocolate bought 996 tonnes of cocoa and delivered a premium of $149,400 to the Kuapa Kokoo farmers’ fund, money with which Kuapa Kokoo is steadily fulfilling its aim to improve facilities and benefits available to its farmers. In the UK, Day Chocolate continues to champion a fairer way of doing business while acting as a catalyst for change on an ever-widening scale.

A recent development ....

The Body Shop International, the ethical retailer recently acquired by the multinational L’Oreal, is handing its 14 per cent stake in the maker of Divine fair trade chocolate back to the cocoa farmers who founded the brand. Peter Saunders, of The Body Shop, said “The Day Chocolate Company was a fledgling business in 1997 and we believe that we have helped it grow to be a profitable, dynamic, ethical business. It is now right that we hand our stake to the cocoa farmers who have made the company such a success.”

The Times, July 4, 2006

NOTES

1 The full case study and detailed references are available at: www:ThePartneringInitiative.org/CaseStudyProject
The proliferation of slums is one of the most acute problems confronting urban India today. Overpopulated, unhygienic and poverty ridden, these pockets of deprivation present a grim picture of unequal development and neglect, especially as far as the basic needs of sanitation and water supply are concerned. The rapidly growing city of Bangalore has over 400 slums which are home to a fifth of the city’s population of 6.5 million people. These slums coexist with well-developed areas and the contrast between the two only serves to reinforce the enormous difficulties faced by the urban poor and the urgent need for new initiatives to address this situation.

**Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board – the Water Utility**

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is responsible for providing Bangalore’s water supply and waste disposal services. Due to high energy costs and subsidies, BWSSB is faced with a huge challenge in catering for the needs of all sections of society satisfactorily. As a result, the poor get a raw deal and have to make do with water from public taps, hand pumps and bore wells as well as inadequate sewerage facilities. High migration rates to the city and lack of service provision in emerging settlements lead to the proliferation of slum-like conditions, exploitative water markets and damage to BWSSB’s networks through the adoption of ad hoc measures to obtain water by service deprived communities.

**BWSSB-AusAID Pilot Projects**

BWSSB began experimenting with service delivery to slums in the year 2000 when the Australian government’s agency for development co-operation (AusAid) assisted them with the preparation of the Bangalore Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation Master Plan 2025. As part of the community development component aimed at designing better service delivery mechanisms to the urban poor and vulnerable groups (particularly women), three pilot projects were taken up in low-income settlements. The major objectives of the pilot projects were:

- To develop BWSSB’s capacity to provide water and sanitation services to the urban poor
- Develop an engagement strategy with the poor, explore and learn from experience and incorporate this learning in BWSSB’s planning and implementation strategy

- Explore potential for sustainable community-based water and sanitation projects through BWSSB-NGO-Community partnerships

- To field test management and technical options for improved BWSSB service delivery to vulnerable groups.

Three pilot areas were selected to represent the different kinds of slums across the city, one; a small, dense slum in the city centre, the second; a medium-sized slum without a clear land title, and the third; a partially planned authorised slum. The common constraints the residents in these areas faced were lack of space, lack of security of tenure, low ability to pay for a connection and the absence of distribution pipelines in the vicinity.

The first pilot area, Cement Huts, with 106 houses is a highly congested slum whose residents work as rag pickers or casual labour. It was selected to address the challenges of insecure tenure, high congestion, low ability to pay and the need for community and shared infrastructure.

The second pilot area, Sudamanagar, is a planned layout...
with around 299 households. Residents are primarily engaged in casual labour and in the service industry. Challenges here include the absence of land title documentation and severe water shortages.

The third slum, Chandranagar, is a partially planned layout on a steeply sloped valley edge. This large slum has over 900 households with residents working as semi-skilled labourers and household maids. The central challenge here is the steep incline of the settlement and the accompanying high soil erosion and drainage problems. It was chosen in order to examine problems associated with the diverse socio-economic composition of the settlement.

The pilot projects were very successful and the overall experience positive. In total, over 1000 households or almost 6000 people were covered by it. In Cement Huts, three public taps were replaced by nine metered water connections shared between 10-12 households; community toilets were restored; drains were improved; and the roads were paved with concrete. In Sudamanagar, water supply and sewer lines were provided, with over 60 per cent opting for individual metered connections. In Chandranagar, water supply lines were extended; 400 individual water supply and sewerage connections were established; new drains were constructed; roads were improved with stone slab and concrete and solid waste management systems were put in place. In all three slums a local water and sanitation (WATSAN) committee was established and health and hygiene awareness were promoted. This helped in ensuring community ownership and future sustainability of the project.

A participatory approach to the planning and design of infrastructure, as well as implementation and management, was a key aspect of the project. Another was to move away from the subsidy driven approach to service provision to the poor. The project sought to demonstrate the willingness and ability of poor households to pay reasonable charges for improved services and the benefits of adopting a participatory approach to service delivery. Thus, the project supported the cost of the distribution infrastructure in the pilot areas but households paid the full connection costs and water tariffs. BWSSB rationalised the access charges and simplified procedures e.g. by eliminating the requirement of a land title to access water and replacing it with proof of occupancy, to make connections accessible and affordable.

In all three areas the project partnered with strong NGOs that had well-established linkages with the community. A Memorandum of Understanding formalised the relationship between the project and the NGOs. Sharing of information with NGOs, Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and community members at each step of the project ensured that decisions were reached through consensus. The strategy was to involve all concerned in making key decisions regarding the cost, location, nature and type of infrastructure to be provided, and emphasising their role in ensuring the quality of infrastructure.

The partners faced several challenges while implementing the project but, through a spirit of co-operation that remained a hallmark of the project, all these could be addressed. For example in Cement Huts, BWSSB stepped in to provide a new distribution line to improve the water pressure, recognising that the users were now willing to pay for the water supply. Most projects do not allow flexibility in the process to incorporate community inputs, as these take some time to concretise. However the Master Plan Project, despite being constrained on this account, provided time for full community involvement in the pre-planning, planning and execution stages.

Scaling up

After successful implementation of the pilot projects it was considered imperative to replicate these experiences in order to increase BWSSB’s consumer and revenue base. The Social Development Unit of BWSSB, in its endeavour to replicate and scale up the ideas and concepts of the pilot projects, is now working to extend water supply and sewerage services to the slums in co-ordination with advocacy agencies, NGOs and CBOs. To date 46 slums are being covered. The experience gained through the pilot projects proved valuable for the extension of this initiative to other unserved areas of the city.
Building on the precedent set by AusAID, BWSSB has set about transforming its attitude towards slums and is forging new partnerships with slum dwellers and local NGOs and CBOs to provide access to water and sanitation facilities. For the first time, the utility has engaged in participatory approaches to improve service levels. It is clear that partnership and collaborative action between agencies helps address problems of paucity of resources and duplication of efforts. Partner organisations like NGOs bring valuable information and resources to the process. Above all, it is well understood that the key to success is building confidence in partner organisations, incorporating the community’s demands and communicating the programme clearly.

The AusAID pilot projects have encouraged BWSSB to think and work differently. As a result the utility is now making concerted efforts to reach the urban poor and with the new Kaveri Agamana Project, assisted by the Japan Bank of International Co-operation (JBIC), has embarked on the ambitious task of up-scaling its pro-poor programme to cover all the city’s slums over the next five years.

NOTES

The Luangeni Partnership project in Zambia has received international attention. It was established in February 2000 when an independent broker organisation, the Forum for Business Leaders and Social Partners (the Partnership Forum), was informed of the plight of a poor vegetable-growing community on the outskirts of Chipata, some 600 kilometres from Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. The community complained that a branch of Shoprite, a leading South African chain of stores operating throughout Zambia, had “stolen their market” by introducing cheaper and better packaged horticultural products in Chipata. Consumers had responded to this improved choice at the expense of local farmers who had lost income and become poorer as demand for their produce had declined.

Initiation and implementation

This situation inspired the Partnership Forum to create a partnership between Shoprite and the Luangeni community. A donor-funded feasibility study was followed by several months of meetings with potential partners and awareness-raising seminars on the value of working in cross-sector partnership. The partners finally agreed to sign a non-legal Memorandum of Understanding which committed them to building the capacity of the Luangeni community to produce high quality vegetables which would be bought and sold by Shoprite. As well as the Luangeni community and Shoprite, partners included; the Zambia Seed Company (ZAMSEED) and Eastern Seed & Vet Ltd, who agreed to supply local farmers with appropriate seeds; the Ministry of Agriculture, who offered the technical skills support required for the production of good quality vegetables; and a selection of NGOs such as the Village Service Centre, World Vision, and the Society for Family Health, willing to support the community with this endeavour. A donor agency, the Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development (CORDAID), provided financial support to implement the pilot phase of the project over the course of 2001, and funding for further community capacity-building between 2002 and 2003.

The implementation of the partnership involved clarifying exactly what would be required of each partner so that their roles and responsibilities were clearly understood by all. Concrete objectives were also established. These included:

- An increase in the capacity of the Luangeni community to produce the right quantity and quality of selected vegetables.
- Enhancement of the ability of at least 60 households in Luangeni Village to increase their earnings from an average of US $2 per month to about US$ 50 per month within one year.
- Promotion of gender equality by ensuring the involvement of both men and women participants, specifically by ensuring that female-headed households were given equal opportunities to become involved.

Results

The results of this partnership were overwhelming. Local farmers were soon producing high quality vegetables which Shoprite could buy and sell. Their average monthly earnings increased to about US$ 48.55 in less than a year and they were able to pay for family use of social services such as health and education. Furthermore, a woman was chosen as
chairperson for the farmer's co-operative society because she demonstrated strong leadership qualities when working in the partnership and a deliberate move was made to ensure that couples participated in the project together. The involvement of widows, a group often marginalised in Zambian society, was also encouraged. The project thus began to address cultural barriers by empowering both men and women equally.

Overcoming obstacles
While the Luangeni partnership model yielded the desired results, it encountered a series of challenges along the way. These included problems in community supply and delivery of produce and failure to keep to agreed schedules. Meanwhile Shoprite sometimes turned farmers away, did not honour an arrangement to buy excess produce and, on occasions, ordered vegetables from outside, leaving farmers without a market for their produce.

An analysis of these difficulties demonstrated a lack of communication among partners and the need for carefully managed meetings between them to air problems and concerns. Recognising this and actively promoting greater interaction among partners rested importantly on the championing position adopted by the Shoprite Store Manager, who had a keen interest in the project and intervened when things seemed not to work. The role played by the Partnership Forum in ‘nursing’ the partnership was also key. This centred on helping partners reach a level where they all understood and fully appreciated the role played by others and the value of working together. Once achieved, the partners were able to begin drawing their own benchmarks and simply look to the broker for consultation. A major lesson was that this seeding and nurturing process required a huge amount of time, energy and patience, especially when seeking to bring a poor community into the mainstream economy.

The replication challenge
As the Luangeni partnership grew, the idea of replicating it throughout Zambia was considered. Shoprite has 18 stores in the country with at least one in each of the nine provinces, while both the Ministry of Agriculture and ZAMSEED operate throughout Zambia. Replication therefore seemed feasible and a model was designed for this which took into account different community environments. It proposed three steps:

Step 1 Setting up the partnership
- Clear definition of the problem
- Identification of local community
- Identification of resources within the community
- Identification of capacity gaps in the community
- Identification and dialogue with potential partners
- First meeting of partners to brainstorm
- General agreement with Shoprite (and local subsidiary Freshmark) about the products for delivery.

Step 2 Pre-implementation of the partnership
- Mobilisation of resources for capacity building.
- Training of the community
- Second meeting of partners to set direction
- Specific agreements on the products to be delivered to Shoprite/Freshmark.
- Specific agreements with Ministry of Agriculture and other partners on provision of extension services to the farmers.

Step 3 Implementation of the partnership
- Launch of the partnership
- Growing of vegetables
- Extension services provided
- Deliveries as per agreed schedule with Shoprite/Freshmark.

In spite of this careful planning however, the Luangeni partnership has only been replicated in one other place in Zambia to date and without much success. While further research needs to be carried out to assess why replication has failed, key contributing factors appear to be:

1. The role and capacity of the broker
The Partnership Forum was central in assisting the start up and early development of the Luangeni partnership. The broker’s role was necessary to create awareness about cross-sector collaboration and to facilitate partners working together. In Luangeni, the Partnership Forum staff dedicated long hours, often unremunerated, to the
partnership. The Partnership Forum, however, is irregularly funded and relies on a lean staff. Its limited financial and human capacity has meant that it has simply not been able to spend adequate time in the field to get new partnerships off the ground. Consequently it has also been unable to look at how less reliance and dependency upon its services might be promoted once the partnership is underway; something that is both unrealistic and impractical.

On a wider level, cross-sector partnerships do not seem to have been fully understood and ‘bought’ nationally. There is a general expectation that the Partnership Forum can simply “do it for us”, and develop partnerships across Zambia without a concrete framework, agenda or the broad endorsement and co-operation of all key sectors. In spite of numerous meetings, awareness-raising activities and seminars, this endorsement has not been forthcoming from either the public sector, which could take a real lead in this process, or the private sector, which is only slowly recognising the link between economic performance and more sustainable social investment.

2. Individual championing and institutional buy-in

The role of individuals able to motivate and push partners forward when problems are encountered was vital in Luangeni. As well as personal interest and skills this seems to be linked to the extent to which individuals representing partner organisations are able to promote the partnership within their respective institutions so that they gain wider organisational support for working in this way. Shoprite and ZAMSEED have both expressed great interest in replicating the Luangeni partnership, but without deeper buy-in and champions to push this agenda forward within them, this has not yet turned into action.

3. Community involvement

Managing community expectations is a key challenge in replicating the Luangeni model. Time is needed to work with community members to enhance their capacity for understanding their role within the partnership. If this does not happen they are likely to ‘sit back’ and wait for the broker to do much of the work. It is also important to point out that the original basis for the partnership in Luangeni emerged from the community itself and extra effort is required to develop this in other communities where this model is perceived as being brought in ‘for’ them rather than being developed ‘with’ them.

4. Seed funding

The importance of adequate resources at the start-up stage of a partnership cannot be underestimated. Individuals brokering the work need funds to travel and stay in areas that are often at a great distance. Money is also required for lengthy but necessary partnership feasibility, awareness-raising and capacity-building activities. Without an injection of donor funding for these activities the Luangeni partnership would not have been successful. Although the Partnership Forum has sought to secure such seed funding for replication this has to date been unforthcoming.

5. Context variations

Particular local historical and geographical variables played their part in securing the Luangeni partnership’s success. In each of the areas proposed for replication different contextual factors are in place and these need to be more carefully studied before the establishment of a similar partnership can take place.

Conclusion

Attempts to replicate the Luangeni partnership across Zambia have largely been unsuccessful. This failure requires deeper research and analysis but the issues outlined above seem to have been important contributing factors. In the end it is worth emphasising that what works in one context may not work in another, and that a thorough investigation needs to be carried out in each specific environment before replication can be considered as truly viable. It is also important to note, as wider findings show, “…that replication need not necessarily imply the ‘copying’ of activities, but rather the copying of successful process and understanding: in other words, it is the learning that is transferred from one situation to another.”
1 For example at an IBLF Consultative Meeting with international partners, 2001; the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002, where it was the only partnership showcased from Zambia, and at the World Conference Investing in Communities, organized by the World Bank Institute, 2003.

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMMES

The Postgraduate Certificate in Cross-sector Partnership (PCCP)

The Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme (PBAS)

The Partnering Initiative
The Postgraduate Certificate in Cross-sector Partnership

‘Unlocking Potential through Collaboration’

The Postgraduate Certificate in Cross-sector Partnership (PCCP) is run by the University of Cambridge Programme for Industry in association with the International Business Leaders Forum. Aimed at policy makers and partnership practitioners from the private and public sectors and not-for-profit organisations, the course provides intellectual challenge and practical engagement for those who are leading their organisations, strategically or operationally, in the development of cross-sector partnerships anywhere in the world.

The PCCP course:

- Awards a Postgraduate level qualification from a Department of the University of Cambridge.

- Provides a broad and deep understanding of the key concepts and issues, as well as practical tools and techniques to meet the challenges facing cross-sector partnerships.

- Encourages cross-sector collaboration in an experiential as well as an academic learning approach.

- Offers flexible learning over a nine month, part-time course, combining residential workshops in Cambridge with on-line facilitated study.

Now in its sixth year, this international course has attracted participants from more than 40 countries. They come from corporations such as BP, Cisco Systems, Nike, Shell, Rio Tinto, RWE Thames Water, Unilever; from bi-lateral and international agencies including DFID, GTZ, UNDP, UNEP, UNHCR, WHO and a from range of civil society organisations including NGOs and trade unions.

Applications are now invited for the course beginning March 2007.

For more information see: www.cpi.cam.ac.uk/pcp

Telephone: +44 (0)1223 332772 or email: pccp@cpi.cam.ac.uk

The key to the success of the course is undoubtedly the very thoughtful and creative shaping of the programme... including an impressive level of risk-taking and experiment.

GERD TROGEMANN, UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME
The Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme

‘Skills and Integrity for Successful Multi-Sector Partnering’

The Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme (PBAS) was established in 2003. It is developed and managed by the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) and the UK’s Overseas Development Institute (ODI). The aim is to develop an international cadre of well-qualified professionals operating as partnership brokers either from within a partner organisation or in an independent, external capacity.

The Scheme involves an intensive seven-day skills development course followed by a three-month period of mentored professional practice. Accreditation is awarded to those candidates who successfully complete the skills training and achieve a pass grade for a logbook designed to track learning during the three-month professional practice period. The logbook, together with a Final Project that looks in detail at a specific aspect of the partnership brokering process, are assessed by both internal and external examiners. Successful candidates are expected to sign and commit to a set of eight principles of good brokering practice.

To date, some 160 candidates in eight cohorts have come from Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, East Timor, Ethiopia, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, New Caledonia, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Tanzania, Trinidad, UK, USA, Venezuela and Zambia.

In response to demand, further cohorts are planned for the Pacific region (October 2006), West Africa (December 2006), South-East Asia (February 2007), South Asia (April 2007) and Europe (July 2007).

FOR FURTHER DETAILS OF THE PROGRAMME AND DATES OF FORTHCOMING COHORTS, SEE THE PBAS WEBSITE: wwwodiorguk/pppg/PBAS/schemehtml

TELEPHONE: +44 207 922 0386 OR EMAIL: c.taylorodiorguk
The Partnering Initiative

‘Developing the Art and Science of Cross-sector Partnership’


The Partnering Initiative focuses on advancing and disseminating cutting-edge knowledge and methodologies for effective cross-sector partnerships for sustainable development. It works in a highly adaptable and collaborative way to support individuals, organisations and partnerships to partner more effectively.

The Partnering Initiative’s portfolio of work includes the following:

- **Courses**: Designing and delivering tailored learning programmes in cross-sector partnering for organisations either for in-house training or for building partnering capacity together with their partners.

- **Professional Practice**: Offering skills-based training and developing tools such as learning case studies and practitioner seminars to address specific partnership issues.

- **Research and Publications**: Providing thought leadership by undertaking original action research and publishing the findings. Publications include the annual journal Partnership Matters and The Case Study Toolbook, part of the toolbook collection.

- **Resource Bank**: Serving as a ‘hub’ for individuals and organisations by providing resources on cross-sector partnership.

- **Creative Connections**: Actively seeking to collaborate with other organisations and individuals on partnership projects and innovative joint activities.

- **Identification of knowledge and skills gaps in partnering in order to design appropriate solutions**;

- **Design and delivery of awareness-raising events**;

- **Facilitation of workshops, skills training and larger public events**;

- **Case study work; and,**

- **Other support for partners through facilitation of strategic or operational evaluation and review of partnerships**.

The Initiative is committed to being a mission-driven non-profit organisation, with a belief in empowering those it works with to develop their partnering capacity and to become increasingly competent and independent.

In developing the ‘art and science’ of cross-sector partnership, The Partnering Initiative is helping to build greater rigour, professionalism and creativity in the global partnership movement.

For more information on The Partnering Initiative, visit www.thepartneringinitiative.org
The Partnering Initiative News

PUBLICATIONS

The Partnering Toolbook (2004) written by Ros Tennyson (Director of The Partnering Initiative) offers a concise overview of the essential elements that make for effective partnering. The publication is in two parts: a narrative which provides a framework for thinking about cross-sector partnerships by introducing a twelve-step partnering cycle, and a selection of user-friendly, stand-alone tools for planning and reviewing partnerships. It is available in 19 languages including Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hindi, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Swahili as well as English.

The Toolbook was produced by the IBLF in co-operation with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Brokering Guidebook: Navigating effective sustainable development partnerships (2005) also written by Ros Tennyson, is designed as a sister publication to The Partnering Toolbook and is structured around the four main phases of the partnering cycle, offering a framework for reflection on the responsibilities, competencies and skills needed at each stage. Providing practical support, the aim of the Guidebook is to illuminate the critical part played by brokers in multi-sector partnerships, as both process managers and behind-the-scenes leaders. The Guidebook seeks to support actual and potential partners, external donors and any individuals or organisations that believe they may be suited to the broker’s role.

The Guidebook was produced by the IBLF in co-operation with the UN System Staff College (UNSSC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Rio Tinto plc.

The Case Study Toolbook: Partnership case studies as tools for change (2005) was completed as part of a one year Case Study project – a collaboration between The Partnering Initiative, the Alcan Prize for Sustainability and SEED (Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development). The aims were to provide insights into the process of successful cross-sector partnering, create better case study collection and dissemination methods and deepen understanding of how case studies may be used more effectively as tools for change.
The Toolbook is for all partnership practitioners irrespective of sector or partnering role(s), whether they are working on partnerships at an operational or a strategic level and whether they are ‘internal’ or ‘external’ to the partnership being studied.

Working Together: A critical analysis of cross-sector partnerships in Southern Africa (2005) Based on a two-year research programme, this publication examines how effective cross-sector partnerships have been in addressing poverty eradication. Its evidence is gathered from six partnership case studies in South Africa and Zambia established to address development issues in the areas of agriculture, health and education. Contents include a general overview of the partnership concept, background material on the Southern African context within which the partnerships reviewed were formed, generic issues across the cases studied and recommendations for researchers, policy-makers and partnership practitioners.

The study was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and managed by the University of Cambridge Programme for Industry (CPI) with support from the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF), the Partnership Forum of Zambia and the Leadership Centre at the University of KwaZuluNatal, South Africa.

Further Toolbooks Planned

Walking The Talk: Designing and implementing an effective partnership communications strategy – scheduled for publication in November 2006

Moving On: Planning and managing exits, transitions and change strategies in cross-sector partnerships – scheduled for publication in February 2007
PRACTICE BASED RESEARCH

The Partnering Initiative has expanded its research portfolio to include a number of new themes that are important to a deeper understanding of the practice of cross-sector partnering. All Partnering Initiative research projects are conducted using participative methodologies and outputs are designed to be highly practical (including case studies, training materials and practitioner tools). Partnerships and partner organisations interested in participating in any of these new initiatives should make contact with the lead researcher identified below.

Cultures within Cultures: Exploring cross-cultural impacts in cross-sector partnerships

“Culture can be defined as a shared system of meaning. It dictates what we pay attention to, how we act, and what we value”.1 Evidence suggests that cultural diversity may be a more significant challenge in inter-organisational collaboration than managing sector differences. In organisational terms, culture can influence leadership style, values, attitudes, behaviours, methods of working and communications. The working hypothesis in this research is that partnerships may require the development of a much deeper understanding and sensitivity to cultural diversity if collaboration between non-traditional partners is to be successful and sustainable.

Working with Cultural Fluency Ltd, a private sector organisation specialising in cross-cultural management training and consultancy, the research project will:

- Provide useful insight into the most common challenges arising from cultural differences when working in cross-sector partnerships for sustainable development
- Understand how culture affects partnerships at different phases of the partnering cycle
- Develop an approach to building cultural awareness and ‘fluency’ skills into partnerships in order to promote more effective partnering
- Produce guidance for managing cross-cultural challenges in cross-sector partnerships.

Lead researcher: Eva Halper, Programmes Director, The Partnering Initiative
eva.halper@iblf.org

Leadership and Partnership: A contradiction in terms?

Leaders are those with vision, the capacity to inspire and influence combined with the ability to champion a new initiative or idea. Traditionally a leader stands out from the crowd. But what styles of leadership are appropriate and how differently does leadership manifest itself in a partnership model where consensus, collaboration and shared decision-making are the foundation? Is a new kind of leadership called for? Can partnerships be a training ground for new types of leader?

This research will focus on these questions by exploring:

- The range and nature of leadership roles commonly found within a cross-sector partnership
- Specific leadership competencies and styles required for partnerships
- The boundaries and overlaps between leadership, management and co-ordination of partnerships
- How leadership can be shared between partners in different ways and at different stages of the partnering process.

Lead Researcher: Amanda Bowman, Programmes Director, IBLF amanda.bowman@iblf.org

Testing Partnership Inclusivity: A gendered perspective

Cross-sector partnering appears to offer possibilities for groups that may be marginalised in development programmes to participate more fully in changes that affect their lives. Recent research suggests that a useful way of testing this is to analyse partnerships from the perspective of gender.2 How far do they offer equal opportunities for men and women in the way they work? What power relations condition gender engagement? To what degree do partnering practices work against, reinforce or create gender inequalities and at what levels? What solutions have
been developed to address disparities?

This study aims to explore gender equality and inclusion in a selection of different partnerships. It will involve an examination of partnering structures and processes; the allocation of roles and responsibilities, access to and participation in planning, decision-making and resource distribution, communication practices and use of language. Careful consideration will also be given to the context in which the partnership is situated and the extent to which prevailing attitudes and norms are manifested within it, as well as issues that cross-cut with gender and impact inclusion.

Lead researcher: Leda Stott, Senior Associate, The Partnering Initiative lstott@telefonica.net

**Being ‘the Enemy’: The corporate response**

According to a recent survey, over 90 per cent of CEOs feel that partnerships between business, government and civil society must play a partial or major role in addressing key development challenges the world faces today.

However, there is a perception that companies are using partnership as a ‘quick fix’ response to criticism of their negative social, economic or environmental behaviour. Some campaigning not-for-profit organisations continue to view the partnering motives of companies with mistrust, believing their reasons for engagement to be cynical and narrowly self-interested.

This aim of this research is to explore this critique, assess its validity and examine how selected companies have responded. The following questions will be used as the starting point: How has being perceived and positioned as ‘the enemy’ impacted the company? What criticism was (in the company’s view) justified and what wasn’t? Has the company changed its practice as a result? Have these changes made a difference to: Their corporate behaviour? Economic, social, environmental sustainability? Public perceptions? Is there tangible evidence of the claims they make? How have their critics responded?

For further information contact: info@thepartneringinitiative.org

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3. Survey findings from 2004 Global Corporate Citizenship Initiative survey outlined in Partnering for Success:

Business Perspectives on Multi-stakeholder Partnerships, World Economic Forum in cooperation with IBLF and Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government.