



IN COLLABORATION WITH



PARTNERSHIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Reflection Essays



PARTNERSHIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Reflection Essays

Edited by

Stella Pfisterer

With support by

Nasim Payandeh, Andrea da Rosa and Ismaela Stöteler

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This compendium presents reflection essays written by participants of the module *Partnerships for International Sustainable Development* of the Postgraduate Course “International Sustainable Development” for professionals in business and society organized by the University of Applied Sciences Leiden in collaboration with the Partnerships Resource Centre.

The views expressed in the essays are solely those of the authors.



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Preface

This is a special publication from a special group: the first cohort of *International Sustainable Development, postgraduate course for professionals in business and society*.

The publication is the tangible result of one of the five modules of the course: Partnerships for International Sustainable Development. It offers the reflective essays that the participants wrote in conclusion of the module.

Given the interdisciplinary character of the course, it is only logical to offer a module that focuses explicitly on cross-sector cooperation. Not only because the importance of cross-sector partnerships and multi-stakeholder approaches is widely recognised, but even more so because in practice it turns out to be difficult to initiate and manage successful cooperation. Thus, the partnerships module contributes largely to the course's aim of training professionals who can contribute to complex solutions needed by being creative thinkers with the ability to build bridges across sectors, cultures and nationalities.

Indeed, the ten participants to the module 'Partnerships for International Sustainable Development' were working with NGO's, businesses and (local) government, thus forming a truly cross-sector learning environment in itself. Even though there was a slight NGO-majority, there was enough diversity, which added value to the many vivid discussions during the lectures and is reflected in the very different topics that the essays cover. This compendium does not entail all essays, as in some cases confidentiality of the processes and organizations involved have been respected.

The module itself was a successful partnership between the Centre of Management & Business of University of Applied Sciences Leiden and the Partnerships Resource Centre (PrC) of Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. I would like to thank all those from the PrC who contributed their expertise to the module, but most of all Stella Pfisterer for her competent and enthusiastic cooperation.

For me, being the initiator and coordinator of the course, it is rewarding to see this outcome of the module 'Partnerships for International Sustainable Development'. Hopefully many more compendia will follow during the years to come, from groups as constructive, involved and diverse as this first cohort.

I hope reading the various essays will provide you with insights and inspiration.

Mirjam Minderman
Account Manager International Sustainable Development
University of Applied Sciences Leiden

Leiden, April 2013

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Introduction

Partnerships between public sector, private sector and civil society are becoming increasingly prominent in international sustainable development. The three sectors are acknowledged to be interdependent, and major societal issues can only be jointly tackled. The underlying rationale of cross-sector partnerships is that partners jointly address a specific issue (or problem of mutual concern) by sharing risks and responsibilities through contributing their 'core complementary competencies'¹ in order to achieve 'collaborative advantage'² – i.e. favourable results for all partners involved which could not have been achieved by one organization acting alone.

However, partnerships for international sustainable development operate in complex environments. Private, public and civil society organizations often speak different languages, have diverse interests, contradictory logics and agendas, strategies, and operate in a context of specific organizational cultures. To overcome these divides among the partners and to produce successful outcomes of the partnering project is challenging. Partnership management implies therefore to build mutual understanding, to foster mutual respect, and to focus on joint problem solving and relationship management. In this context, organizations increasingly require collaborative capabilities for successful partnering. Specific knowledge and skills on how to facilitate the partnering process and how to develop a 'partnering strategy' are required in order to make full use of the potential which partnerships can offer to organizations.

Why this module?

This is exactly why the module 'Partnerships for International Sustainable Development' aims to provide practitioners with insights related to selected partnering topics, the possibility for reflection and a number of tools and skills for dealing with cross-sector partnership in practice.

How to deal with the differences of organizations in cross-sector partnerships (e.g. "different languages" and cultures)?	How to analyse and best deal with power imbalances in partnerships?
How to facilitate that organizations understand each other?	How to best deal with different interests of partners in a partnership?
How to manage and achieve alignment between organizations?	What are particularities of partnerships to address issues in the food chain?
How to define the added value of a partnership?	How to deal with the fact that some organizations use partnerships for 'greenwashing'?
What are "do's and don'ts" for good results in partnerships?	When to use partnerships and when not?

Table 1: Questions which the participants aimed to discuss during the module.

¹ Waner, M. and Sullivan, R. (2004). *Putting Partnerships to Work: Strategic Alliances for Development Between the Government, the Private Sector and Civil Society*. Greenleaf Publishing Limited.

² Huxham, C. and Vangen, S.E. (2005). *Managing to collaborate: The theory and practice of collaborative advantage*. Routledge.

In five sessions, the 10 participants have gained insights in how cross-sector partnerships contribute to international sustainable development. By the end of the module it was expected that participants:

- Have insights in the different roles NGOs, private sector and public sector (can) play and how partnerships create value through linking core complementary competencies of partners from different societal sectors;
- Have a broad understanding of factors of success and failure of cross-sector partnerships;
- Are equipped with a combination of basic analytical, technical and managerial insights and tools for the management of partnerships for sustainable development in different partnering phases;
- Have been challenged to think critically about the discussed themes and reflect on how to apply the knowledge in their partnership activities at their organizations or in their working environment.

Given the international perspective of the course - with a specific focus on developing countries and emerging markets - substantial attention has been paid to partnerships embedded in development cooperation. The module provided a combination of inspiration and practical tools, based on the competences of problem analysis and assessment, building and managing relations and creative thinking.

What have we done in the module?

In the module, we approached current issues of cross-sector partnerships from different perspectives: first, the concept of cross-sector partnerships was clarified, second the module provided insights in the strategies which NGOs, business and government apply when working in collaboration as well as the challenges they face in cross-sector collaboration. Third, the training unravelled the dynamics of the partnering process and how to effectively deal with them.

The **first session** introduced the concept of cross-sector partnerships for international sustainable development. We tried to find our way through the 'jungle' of currently used terms for collaborations such as councils, roundtables, action networks, platforms and partnerships in order to get a better understanding of the rich tapestry of collaboration. We explored the rationale for partnering and based on analysing a number of definitions we came up with a list of 'ideal features' of cross-sector partnerships. Based on a case-study and the partnering experience of the participants, we discussed what actually makes a partnership a partnership and how challenging it is to achieve core partnering principles in practice. It was therefore introduced to think about collaborative relationships in terms of a continuum which can reach – dependent on the objective and characteristic of the partnership - from a 'philanthropical relationship' to a 'transformational relationship'.³

³ Austin, J.E. & Seitanidi, M.M. (2012). Collaborative Value Creation: A Review of Partnering Between Nonprofits and Businesses: Part I. Value Creation Spectrum and Collaboration Stages. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41(5), 726-758.

The **second session** approached cross-sector partnering from a NGO perspective. Why do NGOs engage in partnerships, what are the most important drivers? What are possible partnering challenges in relation to their 'Theory of Change' and strategy? We specifically discussed these questions for Hybrid NGOs (these are organizations that are both engaged in advocacy and service delivery). We realized a number of tensions in these organizations - how can you criticize an organization that you work with? – that makes it specifically challenging to implement a partnership strategy that is well aligned with the overall organization strategy. We have discussed how the Theory of Change leads to the NGOs strategy, in which partnerships take their place. We furthermore focused on the formation phase of partnerships, which can go along two different routes: 'the issue route' and the 'opportunity route'. The issue route was the more strategic route, but not necessarily the most successful way to start a partnership. The 'spark' was needed, without which partnerships eventually do not start. This highlights the importance of individuals for successful partnering. Finally, a number of challenges and dilemmas were discussed. And these were also discussed with our guest speaker from WWF, who shared some of the dilemmas they face as a NGO that is well known to have a great number of partnerships.

In the **third session** we reflected on the business perspective on partnerships. We did this by means of small group discussions in which we tried to position ourselves in the situation of a company. By doing this, we gained insight in the reasons why businesses engage in partnerships, the type of partners they (prefer to) partner with (and why), how businesses partner (forms of engagement) and the challenges businesses encounter when partnering. We recognized that the answer to these questions depend on the type of company and factors such as company ownership, industry, size, and international operations. We also looked theoretically to these questions and to the topic of partnership portfolio management, focusing mainly on the emergence, configuration, and actual management of partnership portfolios. We finalized the session by analyzing the partnership portfolio profiles of large Dutch companies in order to better understand their strategies and challenges they face when engaging in multiple partnerships.

The **fourth session** focused on how to manage partnerships and how to deal with the dynamics which we often face in the partnering process. We realized that the partnering process can be hampered at different levels and throughout the partnering phases: initiation (scoping and identifying), building (planning and structuring), implementation (managing and maintaining), institutionalization (sustaining results and relationships). This session focused in particular on the building phase, when the partnership is actually designed and developed. When playing a role game, the participants realized the challenge of stepping into the shoes of other organizations and negotiate a possible collaboration. Moreover, we explored key dynamics which underpin a partnership what finally helped us to open up the 'partnering black box' and to better understand the collaborative process and its influencing factors.

In the **fifth (and last) session** we elaborated on partnership monitoring and evaluation. A M&E framework for partnerships was presented and discussed. We also focused on how to actually assess partnerships and which factors have to be taken into consideration when developing partnership M&E frameworks. Based on a case study of two water and sanitation partnerships we reflected on their M&E systems. Since these partnerships aimed to develop capacity of African water operators, a current evaluation study was presented which compared these two partnerships and their capacity

building achievements in the past two years. Finally, the participants played a ‘puzzle’ game where they discussed a set of concepts in order to develop a ‘partnership roadmap –from start to finish’. This allowed us to reflect on the insights gained throughout the module.

Why this comenpendium?

The participants were assigned to reflect on the module and the insights which they have gained in form of an essay. Preferably, the participants demonstrated how the learning they have gained from the course could be applied to your own specific partnership activities or their own (working) environment. In this compendium we present the essays of the participants.

Three essays focused on how NGOs actually can develop a strategy for partnering with the private sector. In order to do so, the essays used a different approach. *Hester Pronk* asked the question how the private sector can add value to Edukan’s mission and developed a framework which can form the basis for Edukans’ future strategy for partnering with the private-sector. *Juliette Rijnfrank* approached the topic by investigating whether and how the Brazilian NGO Criola should enter into partnerships with the private sector. Her essay focused in particular on the formation phase of partnerships and which factors the organization has to take into consideration when deciding whether to partner or not. *Linda Hummel* focused on the question if and whether partnerships with the private sector can contribute to AMREF’s vision of better health in Africa. In her essay she reflected on how AMREF, through strategic decision making, can identify further potential partnerships by looking at the fit between ‘theory of change’ and ‘partnership portfolio’.

Maaike de Loor analysed an existing partnership. She focused on a partnership for sustainable cocoa supply chain development and asked the question whether the collaboration contains the ingredients for ‘partnering’ success as identified in the partnership literature. Her essay mainly discusses the relationship between the partners.

Two essays focused on how organizations communicate about their partnerships. *Stefan Beer-Rutte* focused on CSR partnerships and was interested on how multinational enterprises communicate about their partnerships with non-governmental organizations. He particularly reflected on the benefits of marketing such business-NGO partnerships and how to prevent accusations of ‘window-dressing’ or ‘green-washing’. He therefore reflected on how a number of MNEs report on their website about their partnership with WWF. *Geja Roosjen* approached her case - the collaborative programme ‘Behind the Brands’ - from a relational perspective and reflected on how perceptions of NGOs and businesses influence CSR partnerships for international sustainable development. She focused in particular on the role of NGOs when collaborating with the private sector.

Nadia Gombra decided to investigate how the partnership broker concept could address expectation management and create new opportunities for the Match-Making Facility of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs which brings together businesses from the Netherlands and partner countries. Her reflection provides insights on how consultants – as partnering brokers – can in future better deal with expectation management when advising companies in the Matchmaking Facility.

All essays provide a reflection on a specific partnering topic addressed from different perspectives. I hope this compendium will stimulate some interesting thoughts and discussions on effective partnership management for sustainable development.

Stella Pfisterer

Manager Module 'Partnerships for International Sustainable Development'

Partnerships Resource Centre, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University

April, 2013

Adding value? Edukans and its private sector partnerships

By: Hester Pronk

Why partner with the private sector?

Cross-sectoral partnerships are collaborative arrangements in which actors from two or more spheres of society (state, market and civil society) are involved in a non-hierarchical process through which these actors strive for a sustainability goal (Glasbergen, 2007 in PrC, 2011a). Partnerships are established to lead to an added value that individually would not have been achieved. Expectedly, all partners in the partnership have an interest in the cooperation, which can vary between the partners. NGOs establish cross-sector partnerships for contributing to their goal, gaining additional income and achieving higher impact.

Similarly, Edukans is increasingly involved in cross-sectoral partnerships. Cross-sectoral partners include the government, schools and companies. Edukans is convinced of the need to link up with other organizations to reach its goal. Since the end of the last decade, co-creation is stimulated. A similar stimulus relates to the development of partnerships with companies. This led to some first experiences in cooperating with the private sector. An added value is perceived both in terms of increased impact, knowledge and funds. However, so far, Edukans has no clear strategy developed regarding this type of cross-sectoral partnership. On the same token, little insight is gained on results to date on these cooperations.

Edukans is a Dutch NGO that aims to contribute to quality education in developing countries. Edukans aims to involve Dutch society, and the education sector in particular.

In this essay, the central question is whether partnerships with private sector organizations could contribute to Edukans mission. For this purpose, I will first guide you through the main principles of cross-sectoral partnerships and how they relate to sustainable development. Then we will take a look into Edukans current partnership portfolio, mission, and how private-sector partnerships could contribute to it.

After reading this paper, you will:

- know why private-sector partnerships can be of an added value to Edukans;
- identify strategic entry points for different forms of private-sector partnerships;
- know some concrete suggestions related to the *how* question.

Corporate Social Responsibility for sustainable development

From companies' point of view, sustainability becomes more and more important. Making profit is no longer the sole ground for continuity. Stakeholders increasingly require environmental and social corporate responsibility (CSR). Four CSR-categories can be identified. The lowest 'level' of CSR, CSR

1.0, involves a philanthropic manner of contributing to sustainable development, which has a charitable character. CSR 2.0 means doing the things right, companies comply with required laws, regulations and certifications. CSR 3.0 involves a more advanced and active attitude towards sustainability. It involves to explore innovative ways of doing business, resulting in creating shared value. The fourth level of CSR leads to systemic change whereby an enabling environment in a sector is created (ICCO, 2013).

These levels of CSR show a scale from limited, outsourced activities to CSR integrated in a company's DNA, leading to transformations. The more CSR is incorporated within an organization, the more sustainable the organization will be.



Figure 1: CSR levels

Cross-sectoral partnerships for sustainable development

Besides the central aim of making profit, companies become more aware of the need to act responsible towards their environment and people. Resources are limited and if companies do not change their acting, their sustainability is at stake due to e.g. scarcity of oil, water or infertile grounds. Particular large firms are involved in sustaining the value chains of their core products. These value chains are largely cross-border. Think of cacao, soya and oil. More and more, companies become aware of opportunities to operate in developing countries, for example because of climate, agricultural capacities and economic climate. In addition, developing countries can create new markets. Both from production and market point of view, embedding in the communities is a precondition for success. Companies often have no good access to communities. Here, civil society organizations (CSOs) could come in to represent the needs and wants from the communities and translate these into opportunities and directions for the companies. Also, CSOs could contribute the other way round, by creating an enabling for companies. Concrete activities are to raise awareness to the local people, to provide consumer/market information to the company or to training company staff.

CSOs and NGOs sometimes feel a tension to cooperate with companies. Companies are sometimes seen as the cause of inequality, poverty or pollution. NGOs may function as a watch-dog by claiming companies' responsibility in hindering development. Contradictory, NGOs partner with companies to start up dialogue, create a shared value or for financing opportunities (PrC, 2011b). NGOs may need to get used to this new role. Important is to envision the roots and objective of the organization to make sure that the activities are in line with the NGO's mission.

Partnership forms

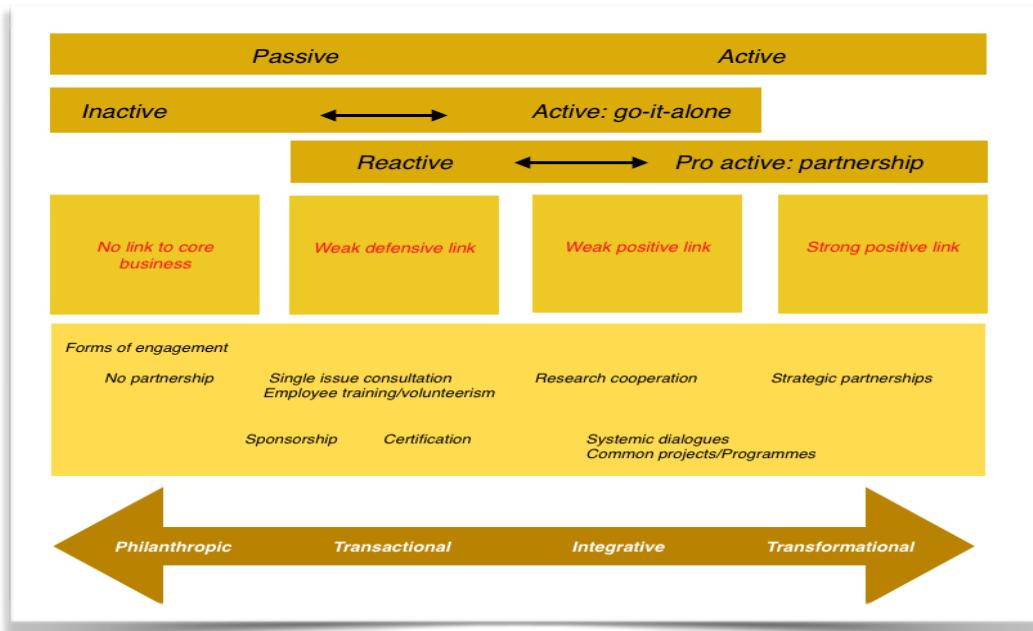


Figure 2: Company's forms of engagement

The PrC (2011a) developed, similar to Austin's and Seitadini's "collaboration stages", a four-scale model that relates different levels, or nature, of partnerships to the company's forms of engagement in sustainability⁴. The levels range from philanthropic to transformational. The four scales can be added to the four levels of CSR as defined by ICCO. In this way, the model will help to identify what type of change can be expected from the different forms of partnerships. Or the other way round: what type of partnership is needed to come to the desired outcome.

Facts & figures:

- Education is the second largest issues addressed by private-sector partnerships (PrC lecture);
- Not even 3% of Dutch businesses have international relations / corporate activities in developing countries (MVO Nederland)

The envisioned outcome influences therefore the most effective type of partnership. This means that there is no 'good' or 'bad'. However, I sense that the level of partnership influences its sustainability. I argue that the sustainability of the partnership is limited at philanthropic or transactional level. Particularly the philanthropic form of engagement is likely to be sensitive to financial crises. As philanthropic and transactional activities are more likely to be add-on to an organization's core interest -even when the transactions are related to the organization's core business- these seem

⁴ The 4-scale model is developed for an inclusive growth perspective. Inclusive growth stands for shared growth, being a pro-poor approach. While the model is particularly linked to inclusive business, this model can be valuable in making the link between the attitude of companies and their link between their inclusive business model. With inclusive business poor communities are seen as both consumers and producers. The poor can benefit from the business development. Read also: Austin, J. and M. Seitadini (2012) *Collaborative Value Creation: A Review of Partnering Between Nonprofits and Businesses: Part I. Value Creation Spectrum and Collaboration Stages*. Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly xx(x) 1-33.

most fragile in terms of sustainability. On the same token, it is likely that the sustainability of the partnership increases once the partnership has an integrative or transformational nature, as the partnership outcomes are more linked to an organization's core interest.



Figure 3: Edukans' four core products

So after having reflected upon different forms of CSR and partnerships, let's find out if private sector partnerships can be of added value to Edukans. And if so, what type of partnerships are most suitable? Before we will do so, let us take a detailed look at the core business of Edukans.

About Edukans

Edukans is a Dutch NGO that aims to contribute to quality education in developing countries. Edukans aims to involve Dutch society, and the education sector in particular. The main strategies are to support local, mainly community-based, organizations with financial means and expertise. Edukans links Dutch learners, teachers and experts from other fields. The aim is to connect people in order to learn from each other and create a broader horizon. Overall, Edukans aims to contribute to innovation. Subjects for innovations relate to various aspects of its work. To summarize, Edukans knows four core 'products', being:

- Financial support to local CSOs (projects and programmes)
- Capacity support and advise to project partners and beyond
- Education exchange programmes
- Innovation.

Each of these four products requires specific inputs. In order to continue to provide financial support to partners, Edukans needs funds, whereas the main input for providing advice is related to human capital and expertise. The next scheme systematizes the four core products linked to the desired inputs and outcomes.

Edukans is largely a donor funded organization. Main donors are governments, schools, companies, churches and private donors⁵. Edukans has about 35 employees, complemented with around 1.000 volunteers taking up all sorts of activities (expertise, support, awareness raising, etc).

Partnership Portfolio

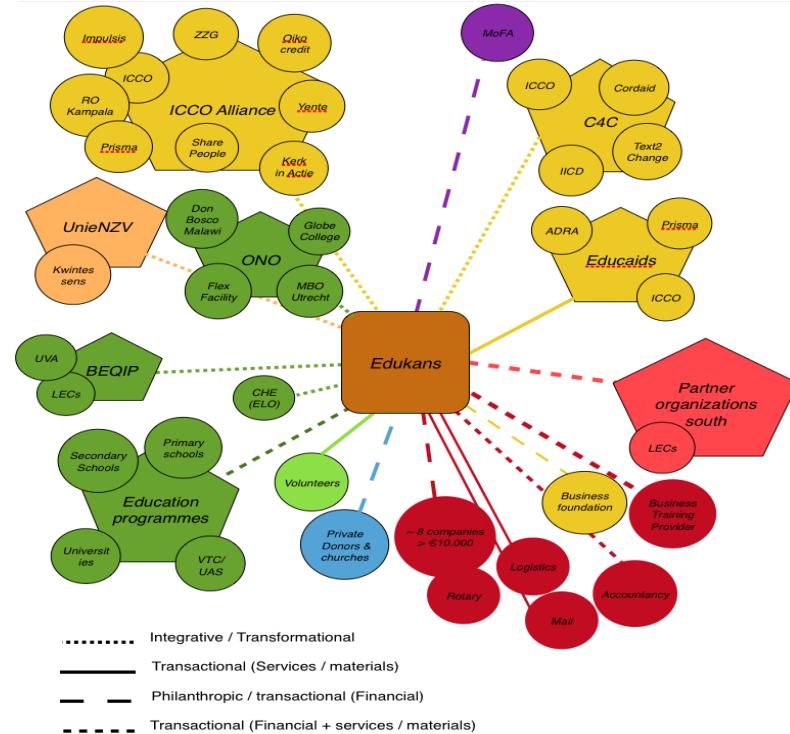


Figure 4: Edukans' Partnership Portfolio

Figure 4 maps a large part of Edukans partnership portfolio. The different partnerships are presented by using the scale from philanthropic to transformational partnership forms.

The portfolio map clearly shows that Edukans main cooperations are philanthropic and transactional. Philanthropic relations are mainly established with private donors, churches and companies (or related foundations). Transactional arrangements are in terms of funds or in kind. In kind transactions are often related to knowledge or services aimed at Edukans or the partner organizations. Think of volunteers doing all sorts of activities at Edukans office, throughout the country supporting different programmes, research activities and to limited extent services in the partner countries. Most contributions in kind relate to Actie Schoenmaatjes.

At the core of Edukans' activities are the education programmes, aiming at improving southern education by establishing linkages with northern schools, teachers and students from primary up to tertiary education. Most cooperation is signed in bilateral contracts between the institutes or the individual and relates to participation in one of the education programmes. Fairly new are connections more on project base of more transformational nature, whereby the project goal is the

Edukans established an extensive partner network in order to achieve its goals. In the south, the main partners are community based organizations and NGOs, schools and government. From its roots, Edukans has a strong Christian-related network in the Netherlands, e.g. churches, volunteers and private donors. In the past few years, cooperation was strengthened with various NGOs, resulting into different alliances. The network includes the government, development NGOs, many schools and, in increasing number, companies.

⁵ Since Edukans is largely a donor funded organization, fund raising is a central part of Edukans activities. However, I relate funds here as precondition to our work and not as core product.

sum up of the individual organizational interests. The main type of agreements are tripartite with a Dutch and southern school.

Cross-sectoral partnerships with companies, which is of particular interest in this paper, are limited in number. In some cases, support comes from connected foundations instead of the company itself. Most partnerships have a philanthropic or transactional nature. Some companies do in kind transactions, related to their core business. Examples are free training offer to Edukans staff by a business training provider and costless storage for materials for education programme (logistical firm). The most important cooperation is with a large accountancy firm. Besides financial support, this organization contributes to capacity building of southern partner organizations by doing organizational assessments. The company's management aims to relate more employees actively to Edukans. The 'Actie Schoenmaatjes' create a concrete activity. No partnership with private sector reaches to the integrative or transformational level yet. All private-sector partnerships are between Dutch partners. Only few company partnerships are formalized in any form of agreement.

Actie Schoenmaatjes is a gift from child to child. Dutch children fill a shoebox with education materials and toys for a child in a developing country. Since the past few years, companies ask their employees to contribute to this event.

Do private-sector partnerships contribute to Edukans mission?

From the partnership portfolio map and the brief analysis, we can see that Edukans gains quite some benefits from partnering with companies. The main benefits are funds, services and materials, all philanthropic or transactional in nature. None of the partnerships with companies are integrative or transformational. Let's return to Edukans four core activities and identify what kind of added value can be gained through private-sector partnerships. Then we see that funds, services and materials contribute very well to three out of four activities, namely financial support, advise and the education programmes. Hereby, philanthropic and transactional partnerships are suitable to gain an added value. Edukans has no private-sector partnerships on innovation, being the integrative or transformational type of partnership.

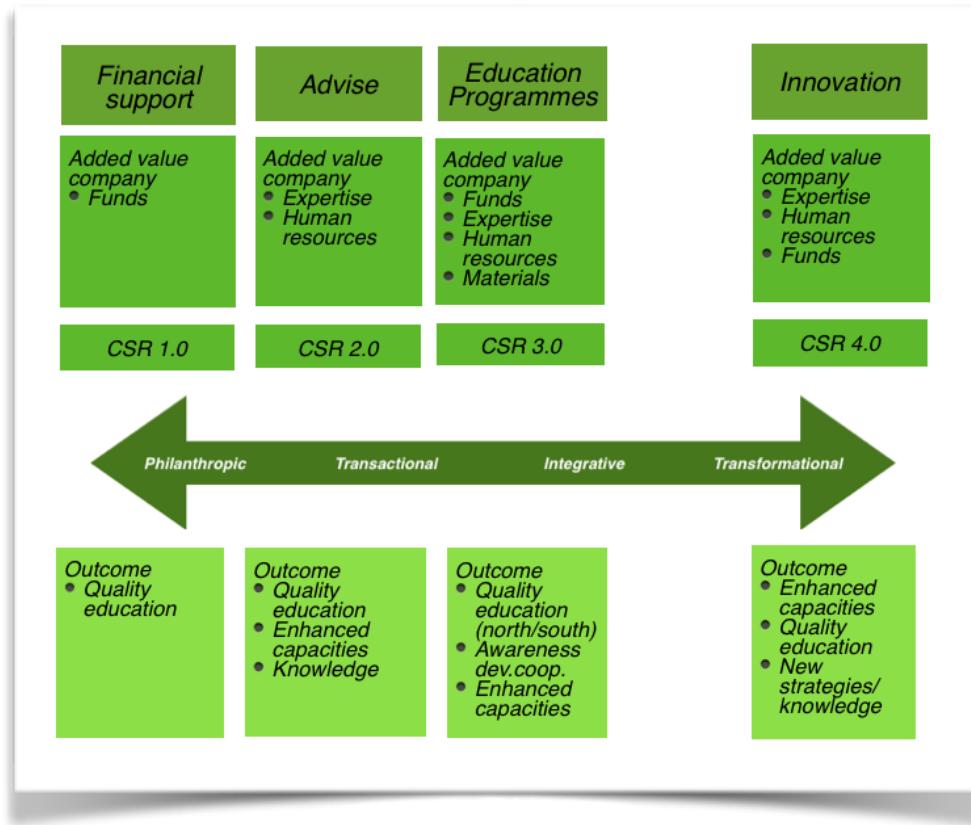
Strategic entry points for private-sector partnerships

Partnerships are about adding value for all partners involved. Needs and supply are therefore important parameters for starting a partnership. Partnerships arise issue-driven (aiming at solving a problem or taking an opportunity), or arise because two or more organizations want something with each other (PrC lecture). Nevertheless, it is helpful to stay focused on the aims of the partnership and the inputs and expectations of each partner. The scheme presented on the next page can guide Edukans through the strategic selection of the type of partnership and company that is most effective to achieve an expected outcome.

For financial support purposes, Edukans can best approach companies that fit in category CSR 1.0. They are most likely to be interested in a philanthropic partnership. For in kind services, companies that fit in category CSR 2.0 seem most appropriate. It is likely that companies that fit in CSR 1.0 and 2.0 would not be the multinationals or those companies that trade with or operate themselves in a

developing country, but rather those with a national focus. The largest part of Dutch companies fit in this category⁶

We should not forget, though, that the sustainability of these types of partnerships is weak. In addition, apart from gaining from these partnerships, the partners may expect something in return. Edukans currently updates a policy paper on this aspect. I recommended linking these 'returns' to the different types of partnerships.



For innovation purposes, Edukans could rather look into 3.0 or 4.0 organizations and identify what kind of roles, expertise or networks are needed to come to the aimed outcome. The outcomes relate more to creating a shared value. Multinationals and international oriented firms do fit more in this category.

The above outcomes can be illustrated in the following scheme, which can form the basis of Edukans private-sector partnership strategy. It namely indicates what kind of inputs are needed, ranging from funds, services or materials, expertise or a combination of these. And thus we can identify what type of partnership is most suitable for the desired inputs and outcomes. Philanthropic and transactional partnerships seamlessly fit in the core activities of financial support, advise (expertise) and education programmes (expertise, funds, human resources and materials). Innovation plausibly benefits most from integrative and transformational partnerships: creating partnerships to explore opportunities for shared value. In the work field of Edukans, the target group in the south is an important stakeholder as well. Edukans has no experience in this stage yet.

⁶ Here, I relate to organizations that are (interested to be) involved in being related to developing countries. I do not claim here that those that are not interested in relating to developing countries could not be corporate social responsible.

Conclusion

To conclude, despite the fact that no evaluations have been done, private-sector partnerships seem to contribute to the mission of Edukans. Current partnerships are mostly philanthropic and transactional in nature, contributing to three out of the four core activities from Edukans, being project funding, advise and education programmes. Edukans could identify opportunities to start up private-sector partnerships in a more transformational partnership.

While the current partnership portfolio shows an added value, its sustainability is weak. Even when companies contribute by relating to their core business, as long as activities with Edukans are not in their core interest, sustainability is weak. In times of crisis, partnerships with Edukans may be the first to save upon. Edukans seems to benefit from a more structured approach to partnership development, linking own needs regarding both input and outcome, to the types of companies to partner with.

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Working with the private sector in Brazil – Reflections from a NGO perspective

By: Juliette Rijnfrank

Introduction

Cross-sector partnerships have increased in importance since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Twenty years later as realized at the Rio+20, the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, cross sector partnerships have become the preferred mechanism for addressing issues related to sustainable development worldwide. This acknowledgement can be traced to the shared belief that solving pressing development problems requires all relevant sectors of society to become part of the solution and as such, collaborate in implementing initiatives that provide relief to the social, economic and environmental issues afflicting society at large. Therefore cross-sector partnerships have become a necessary condition to jointly solve society's challenges. In fact, these complex challenges "exceed the capabilities of any single sector" (Selsky and Parker, 2005, Warner and Sullivan, 2004) and Austin (2000) called this 'the collaboration paradigm of the 21st century'. This focus on cross sector partnerships is evidenced for instance in the increasing drive of private companies to contribute to development and to reach the Millennium Development Goals with other societal sectors (Kolk et al., 2008).

This essay explores cross sector partnership with a focus on private-nonprofit partnerships from the perspective of an NGO based in Brazil. The Earth Summit Rio 1992 was a milestone marking not only the rise of NGOs in the development work arena but also the surge of a CSR culture in Brazil. During the 1990s, corporate philanthropy and social investment became more relevant in Brazil both for companies and society. In 2000, the Brazilian weekly business magazine, Exame, published the special bulletin 'Guia da Boa Cidadania Corporativa', which identified 500 corporate projects involving several hundred firms in five development areas related to community, education, health, culture and voluntary work.

Due to their different visions, objectives and operating natures, NGOs and the private sector are not natural partners and the relationship between them can be tense. However, results of the C&E corporate-NGO Partnerships Barometer (UK based) has shown that 20% of NGOs say that corporations "harnessing their competencies and non-cash resources would make much more of an impact on the fulfilment of their [...] objectives, than purely cash-based relationships". Moreover, 78% of NGO respondents state that partnerships between these sectors improve business understanding of the societal issues, while 50% of NGO respondents state that such key partnerships help in changing business practices for the better.

Private (for profit)/Nonprofit partnerships (PNPs)

"Corporations and Non-profit organizations are increasingly recognizing the benefits of collaborating on a wide range of social and environmental issues". (Rondinelli and London, 2003). In Brazil, for instance, there is a growing number of partnerships between NGOs and companies, as evidenced in a report of Aliança Capoava on 'Partnerships between CSO's and business in Brazil'.

“Partnerships are growing in Brazil, because it has a large and well developed civil society and a private sector relatively mobilized” (Vivianne Naigeborin, Aliança Capoava).

However, many challenges still lay ahead for effective and efficient partnerships in Brazil, in particular due to cultural, ideological and management practice differences. Vivianne Naigeborin, member of Aliança Capoava and international director of strategic partnerships, has noticed a high level of distrust between civil society and private sector in Brazil and a lack of knowledge on partnership building and implementation. In an effort to address this, Aliança Capoava started to do research about partnerships and aims to create tools that may aid towards partnership effectiveness.

The Case of Criola

This essay presents the case of Criola, a Brazilian NGO based in Rio de Janeiro and concerned with issues related to racism and violence against the Afro-Brazilian population as well as maternal health of black women in Brazil. Criola aims to drive change and create awareness about the negative effects of racial and gender inequality through the implementation of health programs and diversity programs. Since the NGO is at the early stages of considering partnership initiatives with the private sector, the essay will explore the formation phase of a partnership. Currently, Criola is faced with questions such as: what is necessary to build a successful partnership with the private sector in Brazil? Will they be able to create a shared vision in their search for business partners? How should they move from divergence to convergence? Should they be less radical, stop criticizing and learn business language to reach out to companies and increase their credibility?

Criola defines partnerships as “a relation between organizations that share common values and goals, jointly striving for racial and gender equality without oppression, assuming this fight as a priority and also sharing tools, ideas and support.” (Vivianne Naigeborin, 2013). But for Criola, “investing in one of their projects does not always mean that a partnership is possible, because they make clear that an investment does not exempt business neither government from their responsibilities towards diversity. [Their] campaigning and critical actions sometimes hinder a positive approach of the companies towards us” (Vivianne Naigeborin, 2013).

Configuration of Criola's partnerships



Figure 3: Partnerships of Criola

Reasons for partnering

Criola has been an advocacy-oriented and awareness-raising NGO, used to confront and lobby against the public sector, fulfilling in doing so a 'watchdog role'. For the past 20 years, this has been accomplished through alliances with organizations elaborating strategies and advocacy tactics. It is because of their activism, that federal and state governments in Brazil have now implemented specific maternal health programs as well as policies for racial and gender equality that benefit the black population in general, and black women in particular.

However, the same cannot be said about the private sector. Studies show that racial injustice is still reflected in companies across their employment practices. So how can Criola solve this problem? Despite their longstanding skepticism towards the private sector, Criola has decided to shift their strategy from confrontation to collaboration. They have recognized the need to partner with companies, because the complexity of the issue exceeds the ability of the organization to tackle it alone. However, a business-NGO partnership is not easy feat either. The NGO's biggest challenge lies in learning how to campaign against and collaborate with business at the same time. What is more, with their different cultures, partners will need trust and understand each other's distinct backgrounds, and dedicate enough time to successfully do so.

The first step is that Brazilian private businesses are also realizing the value of Criola as a partner. Ever since Criola ran a campaign against company Sony for discriminatory language against black women in commercials, companies show serious interest in the knowledge and expertise of Criola. Criola is asked to give consultancy about politically correct and non-discriminatory marketing strategies and commercials. Companies are also interested in their research on the health of black women. Furthermore, the NGO has been asked to give in-company trainings or lectures about diversity and racism in the workplace, on the basis of many complaints by black people feeling discriminated at work.

Altogether this represents an added values that Criola can bring to partnerships with business, for instance in the sense that employees will be more attached to the company if their problems with racism at work are tackled through collaborative action with an organization that understands their issue.

Reasons for partnering



- Cooperation required to solve the issues
 - Contribution to Criola's goal
 - Generating additional income
- Influence social change and create diversity in companies/influence core business
 - Achieving higher impact and awareness through capacity building
- Getting access to NGO's specialized know-how and networks in their area
- Identify new products and marketing opportunities for black women and maternal health
 - Improving credibility, legitimacy and brand reputation –politically correct marketing
 - More diversity on the workfloor
 - Learning and better understanding of the racial issue in society

Figure 4: Reasons for Partnering

How to get started in the partnership formation process with private sector?

The possibilities regarding partnering with business and can be explored applying the Theory of Change, defined as the “elaboration of the building blocks required to bring about a long-term goal”. This allows getting a clear notion of how to achieve a transformation together with the private sector and the potential challenges and barriers that can emerge in the process.

As part of the initial thoughts on partnership formation, Criola should elaborate a partnership approach in which they define their identity, their role and the activities it needs to adopt in the efforts towards societal transformation. At this point, it is valuable for the organization to identify its Unique Selling Point (USP), what they can add in a partnership and the best way to communicate this to the other parties. A market-based approach to their issues can be included into their theory of change-based plan, by creating new programs and trainings that can be offered and implemented in companies resulting in increased visibility and awareness of the social problem at hand.

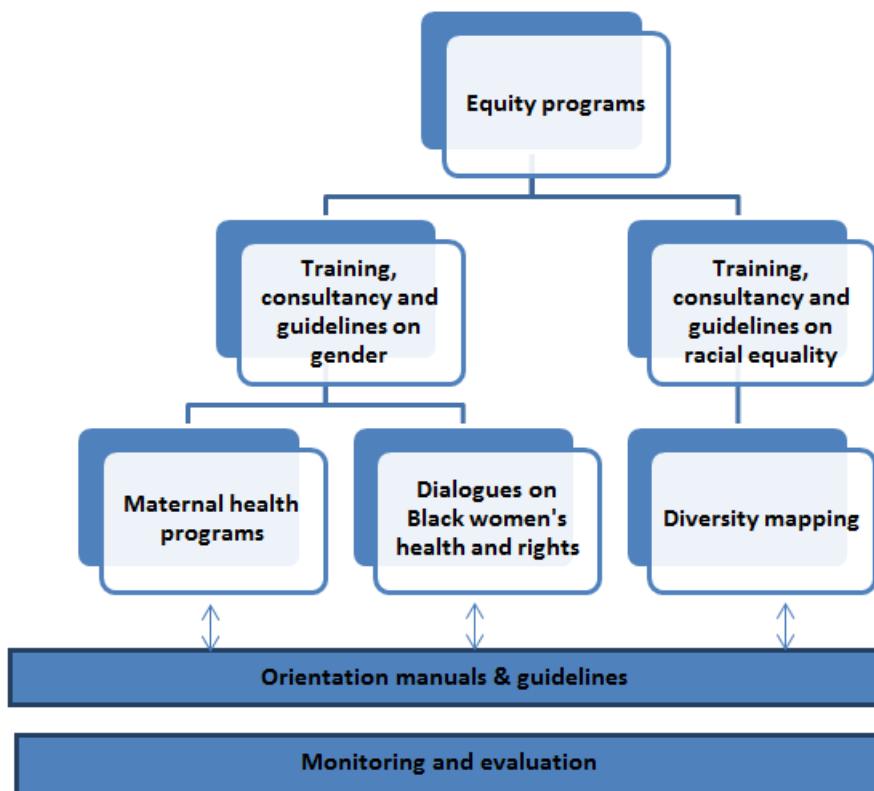


Figure 5

Some factors to consider in the formation phase

Before forming a partnership it is important for partners to realize the differences in size, resource and expertise that are inherent in the partner configuration, and which if not addressed appropriately may result in power imbalances and conflict. Therefore, the position and role of the NGO should be agreed upon at this stage, much like those of the other partners. Moreover, in the efforts of going beyond a philanthropic relationship to a more transactional or strategic partnership,

there is also need for a shift in mindset (Austin, 2000), that is to say, the organization should see a 'we versus the issue' rather than 'us versus them'. For this reason, next to roles and positions, this stage is also characterized by the definition of motivations to partner and the initial practical steps to be taken as a collective. In this issue-driven partnership with companies, two phases are planned at the outset of the collaborative work: the formation phase (initiation and building) and the execution phase (implementation and institutionalization).

Another important factor, the so-called 'spark', needs to be present for Business-NGO relationships to initiate, achieved either through personal contacts between the organizations and/or employees already involved in the issue in some way. These contacts help as well to motivate private sector engagement in partnerships. External influence or pressure, e.g. from governments or business associations, can also be an important way of engaging companies in a partnerships. An example of such external influence of a Business Association is the Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro, FIRJAN, which collaborated with Criola on a project of sustainable development. This serves as an incentive for individual businesses in Rio de Janeiro to explore the possibilities for partnership work.

Another option to engage companies in partnerships is through task groups with representatives of both partners, especially formed after initial contact between the organizations and who are given the task to explore the possibilities of a collaborative partnership. The management of such a task will rely on a person representing one of the organizations, or even on an external party such as a broker or facilitator. However, partners are both involved in the discussions and negotiations. This particular option can be instrumental for building trust during the early formation phase, when two different organizational cultures are still in the initial stages of mutual understanding. Though such a relationship and trust building process may start as informal meetings in an effort to get acquainted with each other, a partnership agreement should be aimed at also in the formation phase to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts that may arise therefrom.

Individual level	Organizational level	Partnership level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindset and attitude of NGO workers (do you believe in this partnership - motivation, flexible) • Individual capacities to realize the partnership objectives • Select the right people at the right positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a partnership strategy and portfolio • Who will manage the new partnerships - portfolio? • Governance and coordination • Monitoring and Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity - helps to create mutual respect • Transparency – helps to create trust – no hidden agendas • Mutual Benefit - helps to create sustainability • Clear division of roles • Monitoring and Evaluation

Figure 6: Important Principles in Partnership Formation

Conclusion

In Brazil there is an increase in business-NGO partnerships, fueled by the rising acceptance and expectation of having traditional opponents come together in collaboration. As such, cross-sector collaboration can be the adequate strategy to address Criola's target societal issues. In Brazil, companies already search for partners such as Criola. However, they reach out to these organizations predominantly for the purpose of conducting joint research or seeking consultation in particular expertise areas, such as diversity and racism at the workplace in the case of Criola. However, this mostly happens ad-hoc and bottom-up.

Why these ad-hoc collaborative actions don't end up in partnerships?

Limited commitment from the private sector and contrasting organizational cultures makes it difficult for collaboration between an NGO and a company to go beyond one-time project initiatives with purely informal structures towards formal and continuous partnerships. Therefore, it becomes necessary for partners to have a clear and shared objective. In the formation phase it may also be useful to use an intermediary organization that is tasked with the starting up and management of the relationships between the parties, as a broker or facilitator. In the particular case of the NGO, it is also important to define a strategy for the new partnership, which includes the orientation of towards a more business-like approach in dealing with the private partner.

Criola, in particular has a series of advantages that facilitate their partnership efforts. On the one hand, the organization is already firmly present in societal networks that bring together civil society organizations and government agencies at the influential level. Moreover, one of Criola's strengths is its methodology rooted in intra-sector cooperation with national organizations. They also participate in different governing bodies of sector-wide initiatives and have gained experience in working at various levels of issue complexity. Criola has also much expertise in respect to entering dialogues and conversations and organizing joint activities with diversity of organizations throughout Brazil. This accumulated expertise in a variety of organizational areas, proves to be an important tool to draw on during the formation phase of partnerships. For example, if Creola leverages such expertise, it can help build transparency and trust with potential partners, resulting in problems being reconsidered as opportunities during partnership discussions.

A final consideration lies in the possible inclusion of the government in business-NGO partnerships, thus creating tripartite relationships, which help broaden the focus and legitimacy of the partnership work and allows for more visibility of the issue and the initiatives implemented to address it. In this different type of partnerships, the government can act as a catalyst and contribute by setting up a framework for companies to align their businesses and strategies to government policies, for example regarding diversity. For solving society-wide issues, it is fundamental that interest and commitment is created in all sectors of society. In the case of Criola's particular issue, a possible tripartite partnership (government, employers, civil society and for example labour unions), which is formed around a shared goal to solve a common problem, can set standards for a new diversity policy.

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Towards a strategic partnering approach? The example of AMREF

By: Linda Hummel

Goal

In this essay I would like to analyse if and how partnerships with the private sector can contribute to AMREF's vision of: "Better Health in Africa", applying theories from our module, in particular: the strategic approach of an 'issue route' and the 'theory of change'.

Current situation

Currently, AMREF worldwide has a broad range of partnerships with the private sector, the majority of which can be described as philanthropic or transactional (CRS-type) partnerships. A couple of long-term partnerships have developed into integrative or transformational (cross sectoral) partnerships, such as the development of E-learning programmes in cooperation with Accenture and various Kenyan knowledge-based and government bodies⁷. Here, the complementary competencies of partners have created a new, sustainable way of contributing to AMREF's objectives. Risks were shared, networks, resources and competencies were brought in by partners (actors from several spheres of society) – elements that the several definitions of partnerships contain. Most of AMREF's current partnerships have been established via the 'opportunity route': complementarity between partners was the reason for exploration.

The issue route

I would like to investigate how AMREF, through strategic decision making, can identify further potential partnerships by looking at the fit between 'theory of change' and 'partnership portfolio', that is to say, via the issue route:

1. Determining the existence of a complex problem and need to act upon it
2. Decision to form a partnership
3. Selection of a partner

In this essay I would like to go through the first step of the issue route. Next, I am planning a series of interviews with leaders and programme staff at AMREF Headquarters in Nairobi, to learn about their vision, perspectives and ideas. An additional way to apply the 'issue route' would be to organize workshops with potential partners and investigate the issues route together. After consolidating the inputs, step 2 can be finalized and step 3 can be started.

Step 1: Determining the existence of a complex issue.

The complex issue that AMREF has taken up as an NGO is the issue of health in Africa.

"Complex issues also create different responsibilities for each party" (Van Tulder & Van der Zwart, 2006). The most appropriate issues that should be addressed by business-NGO

⁷ For case description refer to: <http://amref.ichameleon.com/our-partners/corporate-partners/accenture/>

partnerships are the ones for which these organisations experience a shared responsibility and which are closely aligned to the core activities of the organisation. For instance, an issue like money laundering, or top executives remunerations is not very likely to be tackled by a business-to-NGO partnership. They belong to the primary responsibilities of the market sector (ibid). So-called interface issues like hunger, health, bio-industry or piracy are more common candidates for business-NGO partnerships (Van Tulder & Van der Zwart, 2006)" as cited in PrC, 2012.

One way of looking at this is to determine if private companies are part of the problem or can be part of the solution. The issue of health in Africa is not necessarily, or to a large extent, created by private companies. But private companies can be part of the solution. Besides a shared responsibility, other reasons can be found that lead to the development of partnerships:

- Convergence of interest
- Complementarity of approach or resources
- Shared value

Areas for the formation of partnerships include:

- *Workplace health programmes and community health programmes:* companies can provide employees and possibly also whole communities with health care. (Multinational) companies employing large number of people could work with AMREF to keep their staff healthy and performing, work in markets in a responsible way and develop a favourable reputation in communities and with other stakeholders. Advantages include healthy reliable employees, a positive reputation in the community, and a positive reputation at country/government level. Consequently, in the long run, healthier people escape from poverty and become middle class consumers.
- *Market potential:* developed health systems create needs that are a market potential for certain sectors. In developed health systems there is a need for medical equipment, pharmaceutical products, sanitary products, renovation/construction of medical centres, related products and services and other products used/needed by health workforce.
- *Creating solutions together:* there are examples of partnerships such as the one with Accenture, or Unilever's hand-washing programmes where a shared value can be found by combining the core issue of the NGO and the business goals of the private company in a way which is new and sustainable, and through which risks, resources and competencies are shared.

Although I started thinking from an issue approach, the above comes across more as opportunity-type partnerships, as they do not focus on solving the core complex issue with a partnership approach, but rather on convergence of interest and complementarities.

Theory of change

Using the issue route can be helpful to look into the theory of change of an NGO. This theory of change can be described as: the clear notion on how change comes about in the area of the NGO's social issue, in this case health in Africa.

The International Network of Strategic Philanthropy (INSP, 2005, pp.6) defines theory of change as “the articulation of the underlying beliefs and assumptions that guide a service delivery strategy and are believed to be critical for producing change and improvement”. Theory of change involves conceptualizing and operationalizing the CSO’s target population, and outcomes. Another main component of a theory of change refers to understanding the links between the three elements and expressing those relationships clearly (INSP, 2005). A CSO’s theory of change needs to be understood through the prism of the set of eight fundamental questions (Forti, 2012):

1. *Who* is sought to be influenced or benefitted?
2. *What* are the benefit(s) which are sought to be achieved and in what area(s)?
3. *When* will the CSO achieve these benefit(s)?
4. *How* will the CSO and others make this happen?
5. *Where* and under what circumstances will the CSO do its work?
6. *Why* does the CSO believe its theory will bear out?
7. What is the status quo in the area where the benefits are sought to be achieved?
8. How will the benefits which are sought to be achieved be measured?

Applying these questions to AMREF results in the following insight:

Question	AMREF's Better Health in Africa Initiative
1	Who: AMREF believes that by focusing on the health of women and children, the health of the whole community can be improved
2	What: AMREF's vision is for lasting health change in Africa: communities with the knowledge, skills and means to maintain their good health and break the cycle of poor health and poverty. The ultimate benefit therefore is less poverty
3	When: structural health improvement is a long-term issue, which in developed areas of the world has taken decades to achieve
4	How: AMREF's focus is on strategic directions (SD) and health system strengthening (HSS). The five strategic directions in health are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women's health - Child health - HIV/AIDS - TB - Malaria - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - Clinical and Diagnostic
5	Where: Africa. The three health system blocks that AMREF specializes in are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human resources for health: includes training and re-skilling of community and other cadres of health workers - Health management information systems: we believe in the use of health information for planning and programming - Community systems strengthening: includes giving communities knowledge and skills to promote good health, engaging with grassroots structures, and strengthening linkages between communities and health facilities in all our programmes, AMREF partners with communities, civil society organisations, health practitioners and the private and public sectors to establish a participatory health care system
6	Why: despite huge investments by donors in health products and delivery of health services, a large percentage of Africans still have limited access to sufficient and quality health care. AMREF's current ten-year strategy (2007-2017) focuses on finding ways to link health services to the people that need them by focusing more on people, and less on diseases – making responses tailor-made to specific community needs.

7	Status quo: see above
8	Measurement: see above

Table 2: AMREF's Better Health in Africa through the Theory of Change prism

In the scope of this paper I have decided to focus on the first of the health system blocks, Human Resources for Health, and make an attempt to determine if the private sector could share the responsibility for the shortage of trained health workers in Africa. 'Human Resources for Health' includes training and re-skilling of community and other cadres of health workers. Africa needs an additional one million health workers in order to meet the MDGs for health. Health services cannot function without sufficient numbers of skilled health workers. AMREF is training health workers all over the continent. AMREF's training takes place in communities, health centres and hospitals and its own International Training Centre in Nairobi. One of AMREF's most notable programmes is an innovative E-Learning programme, which helps upgrade the skills of 20,000 nurses in Kenya. It is hoped that this programme will be replicated in other African countries, suffering from similar health worker shortages.

How could AMREF work with the private sector? Potentially by cooperating with:

- Commercial training institutes
- ICT companies
- Publishers of textbooks and disseminators of information/knowledge
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Medical device and equipment companies
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Consulting companies
- Medical schools, (University) hospitals and medical centres throughout the world
- Other educators
- Personal and leadership development organizations
- Mobile companies
- Health insurance companies
- Business schools, management institutes
- Private healthcare companies
- Infrastructure developers (developers, builders, technicians)
- Food and nutrition companies
- Hygiene products companies

In my series of interviews with leaders and programme staff at AMREF Headquarters I will discuss these ideas, possibly building upon them through workshops with potential partners in these sectors. In another publication, van Tulder (Van Tulder, 2006) explains how health problems and diseases are strongly related to:

- hunger/malnutrition
- living conditions (sanitation)
- relative poverty

These are also main areas for prevention. Once disease strikes, other aspects such as availability and affordability of treatment become an issue.

Health is primarily a responsibility for governments, sometimes in interaction with civil society. As van Tulder states, certain sectors can play a positive or negative role. Insurance companies, food companies, and the pharmaceutical sector for example. "The most strategic approach to preventing diseases, however, remains economic growth coupled with an equitable distribution of income and/or access to a public health system" (van Tulder, 2006).

The fact that in the developed countries we are also struggling with private sector involvement in health care, and with privatization of health care, without having found a clearly successful way forward, does not help me to get a clear picture of what private sector involvement in health programmes in Africa would mean.

Conclusion

At this point in time I believe that most of the opportunities for partnering with the private sector to improve health in Africa are to be found through the opportunity route, rather than the issue route. The issue of health in Africa is not necessarily, or to a large extent, created by private companies. The complex issue of health improvement is not a responsibility for the private sector and in the end not for NGO's either. Health is a government responsibility first and foremost.

However, as in the rest of the world, private companies can be part of the African health issue solution, though not all of the solution. These are opportunities for sharing responsibilities, which relate mainly to a sense of social responsibility rather than a legal type of responsibility from being the cause of the issue.

The strategies that AMREF employs enable partnerships and allows for contributions from the private sector in some of their implementation, but not in their core. There seem to be quite some possibilities to investigate in the area of converging interests and complementarity. But fewer in involving the private sector in solving the core issue as such in a partnership form, at least probably not via issue-route type partnerships.

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Potential of Partnership for Sustainable Cocoa Supply Chain

By: Maaike de Loor

Introduction

This essay studies a Cross Sector Partnership (CSP) between four companies and two NGOs⁸ aiming to assess whether this collaboration contains the ingredients for success. The consortium was formed when a sustainable trade initiative facility offered a window of opportunity to “make a significant impact on the rural livelihoods of the cocoa farmers.” (Document 2011, p 6). One of the companies, an international trader, leads the consortium and submitted a four-year program proposal to this cocoa productivity and quality program facility offered as part of a global cocoa improvement program.

After analyzing the characteristics of this particular CSP, in the process of which its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats are outlined, the essay provides answers to the questions what position this consortium takes on the collaboration continuum (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012) and in which stage the nature of the relationship is. The essay’s conclusion describes this partnership’s actual capability in making a solid contribution to sustainable development in Nigeria’s cocoa sector.

Characteristics of this Partnership

This six-party consortium is a bi-sector or private – nonprofit partnership (PnP). This kind of partnership is “most common” (Kolk, A., Van Tulder, R. & Kostwinder, E., 2008, p.1) in the growing arena of CSPs aiming to tackle complex issues in a globalised world. Via the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria, government is involved in the form of training government extension workers and organizing the Public Private Platform meeting at state level, but this public sector party is not a formal partner.

It can also be termed a value chain partnership (Drost, S., Van Wijk, J., Mandefro, F. , 2012) as it is a collective effort of smallholder cocoa farmers, cocoa traders, grinders and manufacturers engaged in improving the global cocoa supply chain. The partnership’s status is formalised in the form of a MoU signed among all 6 partners. In addition, a finance agreement was signed following the approval of the cocoa improvement proposal at the end of 2011.

The partnership’s rationale is to “create a growing sustainable and efficient value chain for certified cocoa thereby improving social, economic and environmental conditions of the Nigerian Cocoa Farmer in the states of Osun and Ondo” (Document 2011, p 10). This cocoa improvement project goal sets at the same time the context of the collaboration: the cocoa supply chain in two southwestern states in Nigeria. To what extent do the characteristics of this partnership meet the

⁸ Upon request of the partnership members their names are not made public. Among the 4 companies are 2 chocolate makers, a cocoa trader and a training provider on supply chain expertise. One nonprofit organization is a local MFI and service deliverer to farmer communities, the other one is an INGO.

'ideal'⁹ characteristics of a partnership? To draw 'a quick and dirty' conclusion on this I applied a SWOT analysis (Table 1).

	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
POSITIVE	Strengths	Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right combination of partners in cocoa supply chain • Governed by MoU + finance agreement • Clear objectives, KPIs, exit strategy and MEL • Complementary roles • Entire value chain covered • Guaranteed buyers for duration of 4 year partnership; • Formalized relation with buyers (clients) • Direct access to farmers • Controlled volume of cocoa beans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation sustainable cocoa supply chain
NEGATIVE	Weaknesses	Threats
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers -as key stakeholders- are not part of this partnership; • Lack of ownership by local NGO • One buyer too many: makes partnership more complex • Relationship local partner and own project team • Frequency and form of intra-partnership communication • Working culture: partners have different pace; • Governance: different views on power relationships; • Regular reflection/ Learning on paper, not in practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No full control on supply chain • Working culture differences: Nigerian vs Dutch/ non-Nigerian

Table 3: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis

I would like to argue that this partnership meets the majority of the said ideal characteristics. The partnership scores weaker on the features of *non-hierarchical and horizontal structures and processes* as this partnership is shaped by a contract between a sustainable trade initiative and one of the partnership members, creating an un-equal relationship with the 5 other members. In addition, the often silent participation of the local NGO partner in decision-making is counter to the ideal feature of *collaborative (and consensus-based) decision-making*. Also, the partnership may be too young to give a proper opinion on how *synergistic interactions among partners* actually are evolving.

Being also a value chain partnership it is insightful to compare the cocoa improvement partnership to the critical conditions for successful value chain CSPs¹⁰ (Drost et al, 2012). Here I am slightly more concerned as one of its four conditions for success, the most challenging and regarded to be crucial for a win-win outcome - *involvement of all key chain stakeholders*- is clearly not met. The key stakeholders are namely cocoa farmers in Osun and Ondo states, but this group is not a direct member in the cocoa improvement partnership. The justification being, that the Nigeria context is

⁹ Taken from Pfisterer, S. presentation 31.03.2013 Features of ideal partnerships: Jointly determined goals; Sharing of resources and responsibility; Non-hierarchical and horizontal structures and processes; Collaborative decision-making; Shared accountability for process and results; Balance between trust-based/ informal and formalized relationships; Synergistic interactions among partners; A means to an end and not an end in themselves. Partly adapted from Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff (2011). Public-private partnerships: perspectives on purposes, publicness, and good governance. *Public Administration and Development*, 31(1), pp.2-14

¹⁰ Stakeholder Involvement, Embeddedness in Society, Strong Private Sector Leadership and Trust Building.

such that there are few cooperatives, which would have been the ‘next best’ option after the option of involving **all** individual farmers directly in the partnership. Hence, the ‘after next best’ option is chosen: to partner with a local service delivery and micro-finance organization experienced with organizing farmers through community associations. But still, this CSP does not have its key chain stakeholder directly on board creating a huge risk of this collaboration not yielding the intended result of a sustainable and efficient value chain for certified cocoa by improving conditions for Nigerian farmers in two states.

Nature of this Partnership

Having established above that the cocoa improvement partnership contains almost all critical success factors for a value chain CSP, in this section I would like to zoom in to this CSP’s potential to “most effectively cocreate significant economic, social and environmental value for society, organizations and individuals” (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012, p. 2) and at what stage between philanthropic -stage I- and transformational -stage IV- (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012, Figure I. Collaboration Continuum) this CSP finds itself.

To establish the “Collaborative Value Creation” (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012, p. 2) potential one looks at the sources of value and the degree of these within the CSP:

1. Resource complementarity:	The partnership enables access to resources the other does not have
2. Resource nature:	Each partner contributes either <i>generic</i> resources (money, reputation) or <i>organization specific</i> resources (community mobilization, knowledge, infrastructure, relationships)
3. Resource directionality/use:	Unilateral/bilateral or reciprocal exchange of resources
4. Linked interests:	How do partners view value; how much self-interest is linked to the value creation

Table 4: Adapted from Austin and Seitanidi, 2012, pp. 4-5

Having done a mapping of the value sources for each of the 6 parties in the cocoa improvement CSP I established that all four sources of value exist in this particular collaborative. Levels of 1 and 2 are considerable, the 3rd and 4th value sources are less crystallized, evidenced by low levels of reciprocal resource exchange and modest mutual interest dependency. Thus it represents a challenge for the potential of collaborative value creation. When these value sources are combined the following types of value are distinguished:

Associational Value	Benefit from being in collaboration with another organization
Transferred Resource Value	Benefit from receipt of resource of other partner
Interaction Value	Benefits from process of working together as partners
Synergistic Value	Benefit from collaboration yielding more than each separately → “1+1=3”

Table 5: Adapted from Austin and Seitanidi, 2012, pp. 5-6

The extent to which these value types are found in the cocoa improvement consortium varies. There are ample benefits falling under value type 1-3: such as long-standing relationship between some of

the partners; co-funding by some of the partners; contributing social capital, trust, expertise and joint learning.

The 4th value type is slightly more difficult to attribute to this CSP as the collaboration is still in its early stages. Indeed this partnership's main aim is creating stronger connections between its value supply chain partners resulting in sustainable income for small holder cocoa farmers and higher yield of certified cocoa. Another synergistic value is the societal benefits of this CSP: it foresees including other important members of society in addition to the cocoa farmers as prime beneficiaries. Women are directly targeted in order to raise their share in cocoa farming, so women will also benefit from higher yield and more income. Youth are engaged as the average age of farmers involved in the cocoa supply chain is around 55 years and it has been proven difficult to attract the younger generations to (cocoa) farming despite high levels of youth unemployment. A third societal benefit is the aim to eradicate child labour in cocoa farming. In support of such synergistic value creation this partnership applies innovative approaches such as WEMAN¹¹, on track with gender trajectory¹², new farming techniques, cocoa demonstration plots and complements other programs such as the Certification Capacity Enhancement (CCE)¹³.

I do like to argue that one form of synergistic value is the creation of a guaranteed market. At least for the duration of the four years the two chocolate producers are formally committed to purchase the certified cocoa generated from the cocoa improvement CSP.

Conclusion

The cocoa improvement consortium is still a very young CSP so it is fair to only preliminary draw a conclusion on its position on the Collaboration Continuum (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012, p. 10). Then also, it is deliberately termed a "continuum" on which a CSP can change its position over time. After all, only a few results are known after Year 1 such as: 1660 farmers UTZ certified, buying cocoa bean is lagging behind the annual target (+35% of 400 kgs/ha per annum). There are no recorded results yet for the societal related KPIs like gender justice, child labor eradication or youth engagement.

I would rate the relationship stage of this CSP as transactional (stage II on the Collaboration Continuum (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012, p. 10). As seen above the degrees of resource value in the cocoa improvement collaboration are significant and match those which exemplify transactional relationships. They are just not of such levels that a higher form of co-creation is reached (yet). The given, fixed-term, four year timeframe of the partnership is another factor to take into account of the limitation in further Collaborative Value Creation potential of this CSP.

So far, the societal benefits of this CSP are to be seen, but the ambitious goal these parties are engaged in does have a pretty high degree of further "organizational integration and co-creation of value" potential (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012, p. 11) towards stage III, Integrative stage, on the Collaborative Continuum. Scaling up is possible and is subject to discussion among the cocoa

¹¹ Women's Empowerment Mainstreaming and Networking – WEMAN is an awareness raising program promoting gender justice in economic development.

¹² www.ontrackwithgender.nl

¹³ This pilot of CCE in cocoa improvement is actually complementary to the CCE curriculum program involving 11 partners (PPP)

improvement partners. The current collaboration targets 8400 certified farmers in 4 years' time, whereas 20,000 to 30,000 farmers in both states could be engaged over time.

What are opportunities for further co-creation? Recommendations for this CSP could be the following: considering partnering core principles such as equity, transparency, mutual benefit. All parties seem to be rather convinced and clear on the latter. However, more common ground can be (un)covered in building further respect (equity) and in creating further trust (transparency). Ambiguity remains in roles and responsibilities, in understanding objectives, in getting things done as planned, in appreciating ways of working, in interpretations of power. Cultural differences are at the basis of various interpretations of the tasks and on how to proceed. Forms, frequency and ways of communication are to further looked at since the CSP has documented everything well, but practice shows discrepancies in interpretation. Investment in (more) face-to-face communication, more frequent joint monitoring visits by **all** partnership members, applying stricter mutual accountability instruments and managing expectations, could be a few improvements.

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Marketing the partnerships of MNEs and NGOs

By: Stefan Beer-Rutte

Introduction

How do multinational enterprises (MNEs) communicate about their partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs)? What are the benefits of marketing these partnerships and how to prevent accusations of 'windowdressing' and 'greenwashing'? This essay reflects on these issues.

MNE's reasons for partnerships

Partnerships are defined as "collaborative arrangements in which actors from two or more spheres of society (state, market and civil society) are involved in a nonhierarchical process through which these actors strive for a sustainability goal" (Glasbergen et al., 2007). Partnerships in international sustainable development can be one to one or multi-stakeholder initiatives between state, market and civil society. They can involve many topics: environment, agriculture, health, education, economic development, etc.

Partnerships between MNEs and NGOs are quickly becoming common in the global business arena, as more and more MNEs realize the benefits that can accrue from them (Marano and Tashman, 2011). These benefits are, amongst others, strengthening the stakeholder relationships, getting access to NGOs' specialized know-how and networks and a better understanding of development issues. But for many MNEs, improving credibility, legitimacy and brand reputation are the main reasons for starting a partnership with an NGO. C&E's 2012 Barometer shows this to be reason number 1 (82%), followed by 'long-term stability and impact' (62%) (C&E, 2102).

The nature of a partnership can be framed in a 'collaboration continuum' (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012). Collaboration can emerge from philanthropic to transformational, with increasing levels of engagement, scope of activities, strategic values, etc. The transformational partnership is considered the most effective, resulting in long lasting sustainable effects, in which the partners are often transforming their organization and way of operating. Philanthropic partnerships are often a result of CSR 1.0 (corporate social responsibility programs based on marketing), while transformational partnerships reflect CSR 2.0 (systemic change of the organization itself) (Visser, 2010).

According to the Partnering Initiative, partnerships between businesses and NGOs have increased in number over the last decade. Over time, these collaborations are becoming more sophisticated, strategic and aligned to business objectives. In many cases, they move beyond basic philanthropy towards 'win-win' partnerships that, in fact, generate strong business, social and environmental benefits (TPI and SOS Kinderdorpen, 2010). A good example of this is a partnership between ING and UNICEF, with activities that involve the core business of both partners, like supporting financial education in developing countries. The Partnerships Resource Center states that there is growing recognition of the 'collaborative paradigm' amongst MNEs: 'they consider alliances with a wide range

of societal organizations, international bodies and multi-stakeholder initiatives helpful for their core activities and for developing an innovative vision for the future' (PrC, 2010).

Marketing benefits of partnerships

Even though partnerships between MNEs and NGOs are becoming more transformational, partnerships are still a very good way for MNEs to strengthen their reputation and brand. The first partnerships between MNEs and NGOs were mainly charitable contributions, based on a CSR-policy where the type of work of the NGO had nothing to do with the type of work of the MNE. By the end of last century there was a rise in 'cause-related marketing': the linking of a for-profit firm to a nonprofit cause for the purpose of furthering the for profit's business strategy. Many of these cause-marketing campaigns, however came across as nothing more than 'licensing agreements' or as disguised charitable contributions, initiated by PR departments (Gourville and Kasturi-Rangan, 2004).

Cause-related marketing partnerships between MNEs and NGOs can positively influence the MNEs brand and reputation by gaining an enhanced social image, favorable publicity and the means to influence their stakeholders' opinions (Liu and Ko, 2010). The marketing is usually targeted towards three main groups:

- the general public: not only selling products, but to be seen as a 'good corporate citizen'
- current and potential consumers: increasing the likelihood of a sale, improving the competitive position of the MNE
- company employees and investors: supporting recruitment and retention.

Partnerships can strengthen the reputation and brand of the NGOs involved as well. For instance, in his talk for the TEDxWWF 2011 conference in Geneva, Jason Clay, the director of WWF-US, proudly presented the logos of all the MNEs the WWF is working with, claiming that because of these collaborations WWF can really make a difference (Clay, 2011). For NGOs, partnerships with MNEs can be a good way to get extra funding; especially now that the financial crisis causes a major reduction in state funds. Some NGOs face a dilemma since they have an advocacy role towards companies as well. NGOs like Greenpeace have decided to stick to the advocacy role, while WWF has made partnerships as its core business.

How partnerships can be marketed

To achieve the goal of improving the MNEs brand and reputation by partnerships, communicating the partnership is very important. The more people know of the partnership, the more likely this goal will be reached. In partnerships two forms of communication instruments are predominant: corporate communication instruments (corporate websites, reporting, CSR reports, etc.) and marketing communication instruments (advertising, sponsoring, direct marketing and promotions, public relations, etc.) (Parguel et al., 2011).

Research reports of The Partnerships Resource Center include some data on how partnerships are communicated, based on the sustainability reports of companies. However, sustainability reports are mainly meant for corporate communication, not for marketing communication. Therefore, a research on how MNEs market their partnerships should involve their campaigns, social media, press releases

and of course their website. For this essay I have done a small research on the way some MNEs market their partnership with WWF on the homepages of their websites.

Firm	Website	Marketing value ¹⁴
IKEA	Campaign on homepage: "Share our story on Better Cotton and we will donate 1 euro to WNF"	+++
Albert Heijn	Currently not on homepage, only during campaigns (f.i. the 'Superdieren' WNF animal images)	+
Eneco	Banner on homepage: "Eneco and WNF: partners in sustainable energy and nature conservation"	++
KLM	Not on homepage, only in carbon offsetting pages	-
Rabobank	Not on homepage, only in sponsoring section	-
Unilever	WNF-logo on homepage, under "sponsoring and partnerships"	+
Coca Cola	On homepage: "Partners in the protection of the living environment of the polar bear"	++
H&M	Not on homepage, only in sustainability section	-

Table 6: WWF Nederland partnerships

Displayed above are the main partnerships WNF (the Dutch WWF) has. This small research shows that some partnerships with WNF are well promoted on the websites of MNEs, either because of a marketing communications campaign directed towards their consumers (IKEA, Albert Heijn) or because of corporate communication, communicating the partnership itself (Eneco, Coca Cola, Unilever). Looking closer at the nature of these partnerships with WNF, most of them are not only cause-marketing orientated, but have intentions to systematically lead to socio-economic transformation, for instance by making value chains more sustainable. For instance, the partnership with Rabobank supports sustainable entrepreneurship throughout the agricultural production chains of cacao, sugarcane and fisheries (Rabobank, 2011).

For some MNEs, transformational reasons for a partnership are no obstacle to proudly present the partnership on their website or start a campaign with the logo of WNF prominently displayed. Although MNEs might increasingly choose partnership approaches for systematic, transformational reasons, marketing or philanthropic reasons are still strong.

Window dressing and Greenwashing

Is it wrong for MNEs to market their partnerships? Literature and research reports on the subject of partnerships often describe marketing or philanthropic reasons for partnerships formation as morally 'wrong'. MNEs should go into partnerships for the right, i.e. transformational, reasons. As such, MNEs are accused of 'window dressing' or 'greenwashing'. The term 'window dressing' originates from the financial markets, 'a strategy used by fund and portfolio managers near the year or quarter end to improve the appearance of the portfolio/fund performance before presenting it to clients or shareholders'¹⁵. The term is nowadays also used when companies 'show off' their sustainable policies, but in reality hardly operate sustainably. 'Greenwashing' is a form of spin in which green PR or green marketing is deceptively used to promote the perception that an organization's aims and policies are environmentally friendly¹⁶. This often raises a key question: Is the company greening the world or greenwashing its reputation? (Delmas and Burbano, 2011). The prevalence of greenwashing

¹⁴ Estimation of the marketing value of the way the partnership is mentioned on the website

¹⁵ www.investopedia.com

¹⁶ www.wikipedia.com

has risen in recent years; more and more firms have been combining poor environmental performance with positive communication about environmental performance. As a consequence, greenwashing can have profound negative effects on consumer and investor confidence in green products and environmentally responsible firms (Blumenstyk, 2003).

Both terms indicate that it is morally wrong to market sustainable or environmental policies when the MNE is not really incorporating them. But it might not always be wrong, for instance when:

- Marketing a sustainable partnership with an NGO results in growing awareness amongst its customers, employees and stakeholders. This awareness sets the agenda and creates a growing demand for more sustainable policies by the MNE in the long term.
- Marketing of the partnership of the NGO results in extra promotion for the work of the NGO itself, resulting in new donations, extra funds and new stakeholders. This 'spin-off' might result in very effective sustainable results.
- When MNE's core business or activities is hardly sustainable in itself (e.g. Shell, whose core business is distracting natural resources), a partnership with an NGO might be an effective way to compensate for this. However, the MNE should not communicate that its core business has become sustainable because of the partnership.

For NGOs, the ice is sometimes very thin. NGOs like Greenpeace do not partner with MNEs and even protest against some of these partnerships (Greenpeace started www.stopgreenwashing.org). Others, like WWF, are determined to partner with as many MNEs as possible, which sometimes results in partnerships that are not really that sustainable or with MNEs that promote the partnership (too) heavily or incorrectly. For instance, one might doubt the real sustainable effects of the activities of Coca Cola in protecting the living areas of the polar bear.

This is a heavily marketed partnership activity with WWF, but hardly related to the production chain of the company. Although the partnership consists of other activities as well, focusing on freshwater conservation, by marketing just one of the activities in such a dominant way, accusations of window dressing or greenwashing are likely to happen. Both brands might in the end be damaged by these accusations instead of strengthened.

Strategic marketing of partnerships

To avoid accusations of window dressing or greenwashing, a strategic marketing plan should be an essential part of the partner agreement. This plan should answer questions like:

- What are the goals of the marketing communication?
- For whom is the marketing of the partnership meant?
- What is the core message?
- What is the intensity of the marketing activities?
- What are the marketing activities?
- How is the marketing organized, who decides and who executes?
- How are the activities monitored and evaluated?

Marketing communication should not just be an appendix or a checklist (like in the 'Partnering Toolbook', where 'communication' is only a checklist and tool) (Tennyson, 2011). The marketing plan

should be an important part of the partnership agreement and after that, of the monitoring and evaluation. When one of the partners is not living up to the agreements made in the marketing plan, or when the effects of the marketing are counter-effective, partners should adjust their marketing strategy.

Conclusion

The number of partnerships between MNEs and NGOs is still increasing and both parties often see the benefits of a partnership. Some partnerships are still philanthropic, while others are more transformational. In any case, partnerships are still being marketed, mainly to strengthen the MNEs (and sometimes the NGOs) brand and reputation.

Marketing the partnership of an MNE and NGO can have clear benefits (e.g. strengthening the brand and reputation), but also big risks (accusations of window dressing or greenwashing). MNEs and NGOs have to make good agreements on how the partnership is marketed; otherwise accusations of window dressing or greenwashing might damage the brand and reputation of the MNEs and NGOs, instead of strengthening it. A marketing plan should be a core part of the partnering agreement.

Further research on how MNEs market their partnerships, what benefits and risks they see and how marketing plans are (and can be) part of a partnering agreement could be beneficial for current and future partnerships between MNEs and NGOs.

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“Behind the Brands”

How do perceptions of NGOs and businesses influence CSR partnerships for international sustainable development?

By: Geja Roosjen

Introduction

When I was following the Partnership Module of my study International Sustainable Development we got the assignment to write a reflective essay on this theme. When thinking of this essay I was triggered by the question how do perceptions of NGOs and businesses influence their partnerships that work on CSR? As I am an anthropologist the question of different perceptions or worldviews always intrigues me when we look at people around the world work together on solving certain international sustainable related issues. In my thesis I focused on the perceptions of local fishermen in Senegal on sustainable fisheries and how these perceptions were clashing with the perceptions on sustainable fisheries of government officials. Mainly because of very different perceptions or worldviews the path to achieve a more sustainable fishery and some kind of co-management was still long. Meanwhile, the urgency of finding a way out of unsustainable fisheries is still growing every day and it has a great influence on the daily lives of local fishermen in Senegal.

For this reflective essay I decided to focus on how perceptions do influence partnerships of NGOs and businesses working together in cross-sector partnerships trying to address and solve CSR related issues. At this moment I work for Oxfam Novib as an Institutional Funding Manager and therefore I am involved in the development of new project proposals for our external donors. One of the proposals that I got involved in was a proposal to our Swedish donor, SIDA about one specific campaign within the Oxfam GROW campaign. When reading more about this campaign I was interested in how collaboration of NGOs and businesses are initiated and how it works.

I find this kind of partnerships very interesting and in the first essay I wrote for my study International Sustainable Development, I used the example of an Oxfam campaign which is called GROW. This campaign is the biggest Oxfam campaign ever to grow more food more fairly and more sustainably. GROW urges powerful governments and companies to take their responsibility on climate change, land grabbing, and on stable food prices and investments in small-scale farming. The message is that land grabs are forcing people into hunger and poverty.

One of the most ambitious campaigns within the GROW is “Behind the Brands” campaign. “Behind the Brands” looks specifically at the social and environmental impact of Food and Beverage companies in middle and low income countries. It aims to encourage the ten biggest food companies to contribute to a new agricultural future by prioritizing the needs of small-scale food producers and agricultural workers in developing countries – where the major gains in productivity, sustainable intensification, poverty reduction and resilience can be achieved. The ten companies that Behind the Brands focuses its attention on are: Associated British Foods (ABF), Coca-Cola, Danone, General Mills,

Kellogg, Mars, Mondeléz International, (previously Kraft Foods), Nestlé, PepsiCo and Unilever. Oxfam has chosen these ten companies because they have the largest overall revenues.

I will now first look at what partnerships are and how the Behind the Brands campaign fits in here, then I will describe what the Behind the Brands campaign is about and which kind of perceptions I see prevailing here. At the end of this reflective essay I will try to formulate some recommendations based on what I found in literature on cross-sector partnerships and on the experiences in the Behind the Brands campaign.

Partnerships

In this module several definitions about cross-sector partnerships were presented. Our Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs defines partnerships as “a form of cooperation between government and business (in many cases also involving NGOs, trade unions and/or knowledge institutions) in which they agree to work together to reach a common goal or carry out a specific task, jointly assuming the risks and responsibilities and sharing their resources and competencies”. For this essay the above definition of what a partnership is applicable to the partnership Oxfam has with ten large food companies for the Behind the Brands Campaign. They agreed to work on achieving more sustainable policies and practices of food companies. In section four, this essay analyzes perceptions of NGOs and businesses prevailing in this partnership, and exactly here lies the challenge for these kind of partnerships. To achieve a sustainable change there should be first a shared understanding of the nature of the problem addressed but in the case of the Behind the Brands campaign different perceptions on sustainable change prevail. There is still a gap between what both partners perceive as being sustainable policies and practices of food companies.

Oxfam Novib is an international NGO and a member of Oxfam International. This confederation was formed in 1995 and their aim is to work together for greater impact on the international stage to reduce poverty and injustice. As a global movement, Oxfam is campaigning with others, for instance, to end unfair trade rules, demand better health and education services for all, and to combat climate change. Oxfam Novib can be classified as an advocacy NGO, as they work on behalf of others who lack the voice or access needed to promote their own interests (Teegen, 2004:467). By representing global interests, international NGOs like Oxfam serve as important social counterweights to the economic efficiency drivers behind actions of multinational enterprises.

NGOs’ advocacy strategies can be distinguished as ‘insider’ strategies aimed at influencing decision-makers directly and ‘outsider’ strategies intended to mobilize public opinion (Peterson, 1992). As insiders, NGOs can work within the frameworks of powerful institutions as entities granted official status (Deslauriers and Kotschwar, 2003) or as ‘partners’ with key decision-makers (Brinkerhoff, 2002). As outsiders, they can challenge those institutions’ existence or limit their impact by, for example, appealing to the court of public opinion (Deri, 2003; Florini, 2003). Through their insider and outsider activities, NGOs incorporate themselves into established political and business systems (Keohane and Nye, 1971; Mathews, 1997) and participate in the full range of exchanges among business, society, and government (Teegen, 2004:468).

The ten food companies are large multinational enterprises and they get pressurized more and more by NGOs on their policies and practices. NGOs have the potential to dramatically alter traditional conceptions of the role of MNEs in the global economy and their relations with other players. Despite different organizational goals, styles, missions, and cultures, NGOs and MNEs can effectively collaborate for joint benefit (Teegen, 2004:475). It can be argued that corporations are the only organizations with the resources, the global reach, and, ultimately, the motivation to achieve sustainability, but, at the same time, there are political and social issues that exceed the mandate and capabilities of any corporation. For those attempting to solve matters on their own, it will prove grueling, if not impossible, as Björn Stigson, Executive Director of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, has recognized:

"Sustainable development requires collaborative thinking and partnerships with other non-business organizations ... These partnerships only make sense in the global scheme: to address poverty in the Third World, as much as to deal with pollution control ... business can't tackle all the issues nor can it do it alone" quoted in Elkington 1997, (Heap 1998:5).

Behind the Brands

In the Behind the Brands Campaign Oxfam is trying to change the way food and beverage companies are doing business. The end goal is to ensure that everyone has enough to eat. In this campaign Oxfam has formed partnerships with 10 big food companies that operate on a worldwide scale. In the preparation phase of this campaign the food companies were contacted and were informed what was going to happen in this campaign. Oxfam assessed publicly available information on the policies and commitments of the 'Big 10' food companies towards the sourcing of agricultural commodities from developing countries. The Scorecard looks at seven themes, weighing each theme equally. The index tackles some cutting edge issues that will require rigorous debate and dialogue between companies, civil society and industry experts. The idea is that by scoring and ranking food companies on their impacts on poor communities companies and other key stakeholders in the food system (like traders, investor groups and multi stakeholder initiatives) are stimulated to adopt policies and practices that will help farmers get better access to natural resources, technology and markets, contribute to a better protection of basic rights of agricultural workers and ensure fair prices, contracts and wages for farmers and people working on plantations.

The activities of Oxfam to increase the awareness of the ten food companies are 1) to develop a power analyses and advocacy strategies for all 10 companies and 2) to set up at least 30 face to face meetings and events with all ten companies to make them aware on how they can improve their policies and practices to contribute to more food security for poor people.

In the past years partnerships developed in different forms. Arenas (2009:176) explains that corporations changed some of their policies and strategies, in part due to social and political pressure linked to particular NGOs or NGO networks. These new forms of business engagement are based on a combination of confrontation and collaboration strategies. Today we see the trend of NGOs engaging in corporations and business associations to identify and disseminate corporate best practices. The Behind the Brands campaign of Oxfam falls under such kind of collaboration. Oxfam

wants to promote social and environmental actions and promote and design corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Different perceptions

In a study on the state of Dutch NGOs reporting about their partnerships (Partnerships Resource Centre, 2011) there are several NGO perspectives mentioned. In general the reasons for NGOs to partner are contributing to NGOs goal, gaining additional income and achieving a higher impact. The government is mentioned by one-third of the NGOs as a partner in dialogue and joint projects. When partnering with business NGOs have an ambiguous stance towards business. They point out the negative effects of business on development, but at the same time they work together with firms, either in dialogues, partnerships or financing relationships.

Wadham (2009:13) offers some insights on what is happening when working in partnerships. Wadham analyzed a partnership between an NGO and a business and concludes that there are some important issues to be taken into consideration when researching partnerships. The first one focuses on the partnership as being a process, at the start both parties have strategic reasons to enter a partnership but when times passes they become more engaged in profound discussions about the nature of the challenges themselves. The second important issue is about the fact that NGOs and businesses interpret sustainable development differently. Their starting points are what is already familiar to them and they talk in terms of financial or development returns respectively. But a partnership actually provides them with a framework within which to acknowledge and explore the limitations and contradictions of their perspectives. This can result in a dialogue oriented towards reaching mutual understanding and ultimately leading to social change.

In order to analyze some of the prevailing perceptions in the Behind the Brands campaign I looked at the public responses of the food companies and Oxfam's reaction on the website of the Behind the Brands campaign (www.behindthebrands.org). Table 1 gives an overview of all the responses of ten food companies on the campaign and the reaction of Oxfam.

Company	Company response	Oxfam's reaction
Associated British Foods	<p>"The idea that ABF would use a "veil of secrecy" in order to hide the "human cost" of its supply chain is simply ridiculous. We treat local producers, communities and the environment with the utmost respect. As for transparency ... our next CR report in autumn 2013 will confirm significant improvement in disclosure."</p> <p>"The company has worked hard for many years, over wide geography at all levels of the supply chain to ensure its suppliers meet the highest ethical standards... where issues are found, they are appropriately resolved."</p>	<p>It is understandable that ABF would be disappointed at being the lowest scoring company of all ten of the food giants we ranked. But the facts behind those scores are clear for everyone to see. It is good to see that ABF intends to improve the information it discloses and Oxfam looks forward to evaluating any shifts in policy as they are made public.</p>
Coca Cola	<p>"We are aware of Oxfam's Food and Beverage Scorecard and our ranking</p> <p>"The Coca-Cola Company is committed to implementing practices throughout our supply chain that advance our sustainable agriculture strategy and support our commitment to build more sustainable communities.</p> <p>"We believe in creating economic opportunities as well as stewarding water and other natural resources within the more than 200 countries in which we operate.</p>	<p>It is good to hear Coca Cola reiterating its commitment to sustainability and economic opportunity for women and smallholder farmers. But the company scores poorly on farmers as well as on land, and has a long way to go with most of its social and environmental policies. Coca Cola must go beyond just re-stating commitments, and take concrete action to improve its policies.</p>

	<p>"As part of The Coca-Cola Company's commitment to transparent, more sustainable and responsible business practices, we welcome a continuous dialogue with Oxfam that enables us to identify and address global challenges collaboratively."</p>	
Danone	<p>For Danone, food safety, as well as "health through food", mean re-establishing the links that connect actors along the food chain, from farmers through to consumers, and including our own operations. Together, these components form a whole, and while the supply chain undoubtedly plays a key role upstream, processing and other downstream operations are just as important. It is essential for each actor to take the right action for its place in the chain.</p> <p>- We put farming and its actors at the heart of our approach: at Danone, our ambition is to work with others to promote competitive farming that creates social, economic and nutritional value—farming that can meet the food challenges of the decades ahead.</p> <p>- For any business, taking the entire value-creation chain into account is a huge challenge, especially where indirect impacts are concerned. It requires a consistent, long-term commitment, and success depends on being able to bring a large number of external stakeholders on board—suppliers, sub-contractors and farmers, to name just a few.</p> <p>- Without calling into question Oxfam's choice of critical areas, Danone takes a different approach. We base our priorities on our ability to have a significant impact and to leverage the lessons we've learned and the experience we've built up over the past 15 years. For 10 years, Danone has made the choice to participate to worldwide or European ratings - DJSI, EIRIS, VIGEO –.... that work on the entire value chain and that assess not only the commitments, but also and above all the practices and the impact measures. Our achievements have been recognized by some of them, including a 97/100 rating from the Carbon Disclosure Project, 83/100 from the DJSI, with a best in class for supplier management, etc.</p>	<p>It is good to see Danone has offered a public response to the findings of Oxfam's Behind the Brands report to show consumers it is listening to their concerns. Danone is right to highlight that companies need to integrate agricultural sourcing operations and to apply long-term strategies with many stakeholders. However, the shortfalls in Danone's policies highlighted by the Behind the Brands report cannot be explained away as simply, "a different approach".</p> <p>Danone scores low on a number of issues including the lowest possible scores on the farmers, workers and gender themes in part because it has not been transparent enough about how its supply chain policies influence these issues. It is promising to hear Danone's vision to "work with others to promote competitive farming that creates social, economic and nutritional value" but the company needs to go beyond these vague principles and begin to show how its policies influence THE entire supply chains. This is the only real way that Danone can be accountable for its influence on people and communities in developing countries. We hope to see Danone improve its policies and urgently work to disclose more information about how it does business so it can truly begin to compete in a race to the top.</p>
General Mills	<p>"These are topics General Mills cares about, as we too want to ensure the future of the world's food supply. We will continue efforts to advance our work in these areas as part of our commitment to global sustainability."</p>	<p>It is good to see General Mills reiterate a general commitment to global sustainability. But with an overall score of just 23%, tied for 8th out of 10 companies, and the lowest possible scores on land and farmers, General Mills has significant work to do to improve how they do business. The company should move beyond vague commitments and take concrete steps to address the weaknesses we have revealed in their policies.</p>
Kellogg's	<p>"Kellogg's is committed to working more closely with the farmers who grow our grains to drive improvements in sustainability and we have a zero tolerance policy against forced labour. Clearly the ratings in the Oxfam report show us we need do more and we will be reviewing them in detail."</p> <p>Kellogg's has recalled that, in many of these areas, the company has programs in place: "In one we most advanced and some less, but they are all part of our policy of corporate social responsibility (CSR)".</p>	<p>Oxfam welcomes Kellogg's commitment to do more to improve their policies. While there are some areas of good practice, as noted by the company, Kellogg comes joint 8th out of 10 companies in our scorecard with weak policies in almost all areas. We will be particularly looking to Kellogg for rapid action in the areas of both land and farmers, where the company received the lowest possible score of 1.</p>
Mars	<p>We appreciate Oxfam's focus on the serious issues cocoa farmers and their families face, and we recognize the important role women will play in addressing these problems. Inclusive community development is a fundamental pillar of our Vision for Change initiative in Côte d'Ivoire, and we have been encouraged to see many women step up to lead to lead their communities in organizing local development projects as well as to start new businesses to provide a higher quality of life to their families and neighbors. We look forward to strengthening our approach involving women in the community development process and continuing to ensure that women in cocoa communities are fully empowered to participate equally alongside the many other diverse groups in West African society.</p>	<p>Oxfam welcomes the steps that Mars has taken to do right by small-scale farmers, including its commitment to source 100% certified cocoa by 2020. However, coming in at 5th out of 10 companies with a poor overall score of just 30% in our scorecard is not impressive, and it should give Mars serious concern.</p> <p>Its individual projects to invest in smallholder farmers must be accompanied by more comprehensive and transparent policies, extending to land, water and women's rights. Mars must take major strides to beat out competitors in this race to the top. Oxfam is calling on Mars and the other nine food and beverage giants to make commitments and actions that are clearly in their interest to strengthen the sustainability of their entire</p>

		<p>supply chains.</p> <p>We welcome Mars's recognition that gender inequality is a serious issue and that its approach needs to be strengthened. But recognizing the issue is not enough. Mars gets the lowest possible score for its policies on women, which means those policies are simply unfit for modern purpose and Mars needs to take urgent action to improve them. Oxfam has called on Mars to conduct an official assessment of its impact on women cocoa farmers and to announce a plan of action to address gender inequality in its supply chains. Mars has yet to step up.</p> <p>Mars, along with other companies sourcing cocoa, has undertaken individual projects and initiatives to increase the capacity of smallholder farmers to achieve better yields. These projects are a good first step, but they are piecemeal, and they do not specifically address gender inequality. Oxfam's campaign will continue until Mars announces concrete comprehensive commitments to address gender inequality in its cocoa supply chain.</p>
Mondelez	<p>Cocoa and coffee farming communities are very important to our business. Since October, we've committed \$600 million over 10 years through our Cocoa Life and Coffee Made Happy initiatives to build sustainable supplies and thriving communities to benefit millions of people in the developing world.</p> <p>In addition, we were the world's largest buyer of Fairtrade Certified cocoa (20,000 tonnes) in 2011 and one of the largest buyers of Rainforest Alliance Certified™ cocoa (15,000 tonnes) as well as the biggest buyer of Rainforest Alliance Certified™ coffee (50,000 tonnes). All our European coffee brands are committed to sustainably source 100% of their coffee by 2015.</p> <p>We are surprised that Oxfam does not acknowledge these investments in its report.</p> <p>The heart of our Cocoa Life program is our belief that improving the lives of cocoa farmers and protecting the wellbeing of our planet benefits everyone. One of its objectives is empowering cocoa farming families to create the kind of communities they and their children want to live in, while promoting women's empowerment. As part of our plan, we're working with third party experts such the United Nations Development Program, World Wildlife Fund and Anti-Slavery International to develop a robust set of principles for success and ways to measure and report our progress.</p> <p>Our Coffee Made Happy program has a goal to empower one million coffee farming entrepreneurs by 2020.</p> <p>Oxfam's scorecard brings attention to several issues that are important to Mondelez International, such as improving the social, environmental and economic conditions for farmers in developing countries. While we're pleased Oxfam is raising awareness of these issues, we feel their scorecard is a missed opportunity to engage companies in positive change. We can only achieve real change when we work with others. By working together and focusing on our common ground -- rather than what we disagree on -- we'll make much better progress toward our common goals.</p>	<p>We are happy to see Mondelez reiterate their public commitment to the people who grow their ingredients. But we are disappointed that they are missing an opportunity to put those words into action. We recognize the many individual projects and commitments that Mondelez has made but these projects are piecemeal at best. Rather than compiling a laundry list of well-known existing projects, Mondelez should respond to Oxfam's specific request that they commit to an assessment of gender inequality in their cocoa supply chains which would be followed by a plan of action to address the problems. Consumers should ask why Mondelez has avoided answering this question.</p>
Nestle	<p>"We are determined to strengthen our efforts to promote and support the lives of women in our cocoa supply chain through the Nestlé Cocoa Plan and our Rural Development Framework," said Mr Lopez.</p> <p>"We also recognise that strengthening the gender component of these projects will assist our priority focus on child labour.</p> <p>"We are committed to working with partners such as the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI),</p>	<p>We're glad that Nestle is taking Oxfam's challenges to its policies seriously but they have yet to answer whether they will pursue our specific ask that they address gender inequality in their cocoa supply chains. Nestle's reaction highlights its support to small scale farmers, sustainable use of water and addressing child labor. But Nestle scores poorly on land and women and these are areas of real concern for a company that relies so heavily on land and on women farmers and workers. Nestle does not have any guidelines requiring suppliers to take a zero tolerance approach to land grabbing, nor does it know</p>

	<p>with other stakeholders like Oxfam, and with the rest of the industry to make gender issues a mainstream part of existing programmes across the cocoa sector," he continued.</p> <p>"Taken together, these actions will help us develop and implement concrete measures to increase opportunities for women in the cocoa supply chain."</p>	<p>how many women are involved in their cocoa supply chain and whether these women are at risk of exclusion or exploitation. Words are important, but only if they are backed up by action.</p>
Pepsi Co	<p>No formal public reply. PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi requested a meeting with Oxfam staff who were handing out materials at company headquarters in the US. They discussed Oxfam's report in a 30 minute meeting. In the meeting Nooyi was surprised and disappointed that PepsiCo scored lower than its competitors.</p>	<p>It is promising that Indra Nooyi is paying personal attention to the sustainability of PepsiCo's operations. We hope that this senior level involvement will ensure that PepsiCo makes new public commitments to address areas where the company falls short in our scorecard including land, women, farmers, workers, and climate change.</p>
Unilever	<p>"We believe that the issue of Food Security is a critical one that needs multi-stakeholder efforts to solve and we support the aims of the campaigns like GROW. The key issues highlighted are ones with which we are all concerned and there is no doubt that the inclusion of smallholder farmers into the food value chain is critical not only for food security but for the progress and stability of rural communities in many parts of the world.</p> <p>"We particularly welcome the emphasis the report places on greater transparency and on the importance of the role of women and of land rights. Indeed, we have highlighted these two issues ourselves through our CEO putting them on the agendas at the B20/G20 and WEF.</p> <p>"The report recognises the progress Unilever has made in its policies and practices, under its Sustainable Living Plan and including its Sustainable Sourcing Programme - although information on the more recent progress we have made was not available for inclusion in this report as our next USLP update is on April 22nd.</p> <p>"We do think though, that the report has missed an opportunity to look at the full range of organisations that need to come together on this. Change of this nature requires wide partnerships, and needs to stretch beyond looking at the role of branded food companies. Although branded food companies have initiated some innovative programmes to contribute to the solutions for some of the big issues, brand manufacturers are only part of the solution and we believe that meaningful progress can only be made when all relevant stakeholders - including primary producers, first processors, traders, retailers, civil society and governments - work together.</p> <p>"We also believe that more attention needs to be paid to the importance of improved nutrition, in addition to the issue of food security and we are working with the UN Secretary General's Zero Hunger Campaign and within the SUN Alliance to provide support for the broad-scale approach to eradicating hunger.</p> <p>"In the meantime, Unilever will continue to work on traceability and transparency of its raw material supply together with its suppliers and will seek to engage in partnerships with all relevant stakeholders to meet the targets of our Sustainable Living Plan and help solve some of the issues raised in the report."</p>	<p>"Unilever is right to say that food security challenges will only be tackled if they are addressed comprehensively by a range of actors from consumers to governments to companies, Food companies need to take a leading role in making this happen as Unilever is doing, for example, by including smallholder farmers in food value chains. We look forward to seeing specific new commitments and public actions from Unilever to address where there are gaps in their sustainability such as preventing land grabs and pursuing equality for women.</p>

Table 1: Responses of 10 food companies and Oxfam's reaction, as published on the Behind the Brands website (accessed 7th April 2013)

From the data in table 1 different perception on what sustainability in the food chain should look like can be distinguished. Both businesses and Oxfam have their own perceptions on what they think is the best way of working on sustainability.

The companies state several times that they already work in an ethical and responsible way and tend to focus mainly on the economic perspective; *"we treat local producers, communities and the*

environment with the utmost respect", "the company has worked hard for many years...to ensure its suppliers meet the highest ethical standards", "the Coca-Cola Company is committed to ...built more sustainable communities", "we put farming and its actors at the heart of our approach, "we recognize the important role women will play in addressing these problems. Inclusive community development is a fundamental pillar of our Vision for Change initiative in Côte d'Ivoire", "we've committed \$600 million over 10 years through our Cocoa Life and Coffee Made Happy initiatives to build sustainable supplies and thriving communities to benefit millions of people in the developing world".

Only one company points out to the fact that it is important to include all relevant stakeholders; *"we believe that meaningful progress can only be made when all relevant stakeholders - including primary producers, first processors, traders, retailers, civil society and governments - work together".*

When analyzing the reaction of Oxfam it becomes clear that Oxfam has a different perception of what is a sustainable food chain and how companies should work on solving certain issues. Their focus is on development and therefore local farmers, gender inequality and women and preventing land grab are important. Oxfam uses their scorecard to point out that many companies still have a poor score on these themes despite their promises and commitments: "It is understandable that ABF would be disappointed at being the lowest scoring company of all ten of the food giants we ranked. But the facts behind those scores are clear for everyone to see"; "the company scores poorly on farmers as well as on land, and has a long way to go with most of its social and environmental policies. Coca Cola must go beyond just re-stating commitments, and take concrete action to improve its policies", "Danone scores low on a number of issues including the lowest possible scores on the farmers, workers and gender themes in part because it has not been transparent enough about how its supply chain policies influence these issues", "General Mills has significant work to do to improve how they do business. The company should move beyond vague commitments and take concrete steps to address the weaknesses we have revealed in their policies", "We will be particularly looking to Kellogg for rapid action in the areas of both land and farmers, where the company received the lowest possible score of 1", "But Nestle scores poorly on land and women and these are areas of real concern for a company that relies so heavily on land and on women farmers and workers. Nestle does not have any guidelines requiring suppliers to take a zero tolerance approach to land grabbing, nor does it know how many women are involved in their cocoa supply chain and whether these women are at risk of exclusion of exploitation".

In almost all reactions to the companies responses, Oxfam calls for action and to turn companies commitments into concrete steps towards a more sustainable food supply chain: "Coca Cola must go beyond just re-stating commitments, and take concrete action to improve its policies", "General Mills has significant work to do to improve how they do business. The company should move beyond vague commitments and take concrete steps to address the weaknesses we have revealed in their policies", "Mars needs to take urgent action to improve them. Oxfam has called on Mars to conduct an official assessment of its impact on women cocoa farmers and to announce a plan of action to address gender inequality in its supply chains. Mars has yet to step up", "Mondelez should respond to Oxfam's specific request that they commit to an assessment of gender inequality in their cocoa supply chains which would be followed by a plan of action to address the problems", "We hope that this senior level involvement will ensure that PepsiCo makes new public commitments to address

areas where the company falls short in our scorecard including land, women, farmers, workers, and climate change”, “We look forward to seeing specific new commitments and public actions from Unilever to address where there are gaps in their sustainability such as preventing land grabs and pursuing equality for women”.

Conclusion

The central question was how do perceptions of NGOs and businesses influence CSR partnerships for international sustainable development? When studying the Behind the Brands campaign in more detail it is clear that the challenge in this partnership is how to reach a mutual understanding and ultimately reaching sustainable and social change. When looking at the cooperation between Oxfam and the ten food companies it is clear that in this cooperation both Oxfam and the ten companies agree to work together to reach a common goal or to carry out a specific task, but they have different perceptions on what is actually sustainable development. The perceptions of the food companies involved in the Behind the Brand campaign are that they are doing already many good things and they have committed themselves to do more. Oxfam's perception is that much more concrete action needs to take place to achieve a sustainable food supply chain.

This partnership is jointly assuming the risks and responsibilities and sharing their resources and competencies. When I look at the risks for both parties I think the risk for the ten food companies could be a brand risk. For the food companies it is important to be ranked high on the scorecards that are published on the Behind the Brands website. These scorecards give the public, which are also their consumers, an insight in the negative consequences of ways of working of these ten food companies. It becomes clear how these companies operate in developing countries and how they interact with people and the environment. But this risk can be transformed into an advantage for the food companies when working actively on making changes on the ground when it comes to CSR factors. When it comes to sharing resources and competencies companies can solicit the input and guidance of Oxfam and avoid negative reprisals. At the same time they can bear the fruits of the experience and expertise that this partnership brings along. In this partnership Oxfam runs the risk of just promoting legitimacy of business concerns, as a form of endorsement of these ten food companies. It must be clear that Oxfam is not endorsing companies but offering a platform for the public to make an informed decision by themselves and to promote sustainable development in the food chain.

The activities of Oxfam to increase the awareness of the ten food companies are two folded 1) to develop a power analyses and advocacy strategies for all 10 companies, which is published on the website and 2) to set up at least 30 face to face meetings and events with all ten companies to make them aware on how they can improve their policies and practices to contribute to more food security for poor people. The Behind the Brands website offers an unique insight in the ongoing dialogue between the food companies and Oxfam about the nature of the challenges themselves. The campaign has recently started, but it would be interesting to analyze the same data again after some time, to see if this partnership has provided the organizations a framework within which to acknowledge and explore the limitations and contradictions of their perspectives. The dialogue on the website and the face to face meetings could very well offer possibilities towards reaching mutual

understanding and ultimately leading to the desired results of the Behind the Brands campaign. It is clear though that this partnership can contribute to international sustainable development.

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How the “Partnership Brokerage” Concept Could Address Management Expectations & Create New Opportunities for the MMF

By: Nadia Gombra

Introduction

This essay discusses the Development Cooperation Matchmaking Facility (MMF) program of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs implemented by the Agency NL. The MMF program aims to develop partnerships between businesses in developing countries and businesses in the Netherlands. The essay explains how the program works and highlights the challenges the program faces in terms of ‘expectation management’. The essay highlights the role of consultants as partnership brokers in the MMF and how the partnership brokerage concept could be used to deal with expectation management issues. This inspires a new role for the MMF, in view of a changing development cooperation agenda in the Netherlands. For these purposes, the role of consultants at the MMF facility was reflected by taking into consideration the MMF’s 5 years of experience, interviews with the MMF team and relevant literature on the topic.

Introduction of the Matchmaking Facility

The Dutch government offers a variety of private sector development/involvement programs, which are aimed at stimulating sustainable economic growth in developing countries and emerging economies. These programs include the setting up of innovative pilot projects, establishment of joint-investments as well as the transfer of technology, knowledge and skills in social and economic sectors.

The Development Cooperation Matchmaking Facility (MMF) is a program aimed at companies in developing countries looking for Dutch business partners. In particular, MMF’s target group consists of entrepreneurs in developing countries with a concrete investment or trade idea for which they require a Dutch investment or trade partner. The relationship is established in terms of a joint investment in the developing country (not necessarily a Private Sector Investment project - PSI) or in terms of developing a trade relationship. In accomplishing its purpose, the MMF intends to collaborate with other Dutch support organizations/programs such as PUM, CBI, BiD Network whenever, and as much as possible.

1.1. Some numbers of the MMF

In April 2013, the MMF program received its 1.000th application. Since 2007, the facility has organized 300 individual visits, of which 30% resulted in joint business established, or 36 PSI projects.¹⁷

	MMF	Focus
2006	Pilot program in 8 countries	8 countries
2007 and further	First phase matchmaking program	Country specific expertise
2009	Evaluation program by Triodos Facet	Program criteria and regulation
2010 and 2011	Procedures were adjusted and new Tender was issued (2011)	Sector specific expertise

Table 7: Program History

“Most applications are from Eastern Europe and the least are from South America. In terms of sector, most applications are in agriculture, food and ICT, in this order. It takes approximately 6 months to a year, after a matchmaking program, to conduct business and Companies with lower incomes or geographically further away, are more likely not to result in a visit program”. (Frank Buizer)

1.2. Objectives of the MMF

The principal objective of the MMF is to develop sustainable business relationships between the Dutch private sector and the private sector in countries targeted by Dutch development cooperation. This is achieved through linking local companies with Dutch business, training- and knowledge institutes. If successful, such linkages could potentially result in an export or import business opportunity, an application for a PSI program, or in a Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

The underlying rationale is that the established partnerships may stimulate private sector development, promote investment and trade relationships with the least developed countries, while at the same time provide advantages for Dutch organizations and firms. Currently, market and marketing intelligence and operations or technology knowledge, are not considered as directly sought program results.

In the past 5 years, one key challenge which is identified within the program centers around the expectation of the MMF applicants. *“We have noted that some MMF applicants expect almost instant results and end-up being disappointed, during their visit with a prospective Dutch partner, if their do not immediately come away with a direct investment agreement”¹⁸*. On the other hand, Dutch companies aim to form partnerships as basis for a long-term benefiting relationship rather than achieving quick wins.¹⁹

Experience with a similar Business-to-Business program, Danida Business Partnerships facilitated by the Danish Development agency (DANIDA) showed that the potential benefits to the local private partner include (NORAD, 2012):

¹⁷ <http://www.agentschapnl.nl/en/actueel/nieuws/matchmaking-facility-celebrates-1000th-application>

¹⁸ <http://www.agentschapnl.nl/en/actueel/nieuws/matchmaking-facility-celebrates-1000th-application>

¹⁹ <http://www.agentschapnl.nl/en/actueel/nieuws/matchmaking-facility-celebrates-1000th-application>

- Technical expertise
- Exposure to latest trends and information
- Benefit from experience of partner
- International affiliation help in building brand

1.3. How the MMF works

The MMF targets SMEs in developing countries that ideally have a feasible project idea, a solid financial base, with a workforce of at least 10 people, and active for at least two years. In order to reach out to its target groups, the Matchmaking Facility is marketed by Dutch Embassies in participating countries, while Agency NL manages the Facility's matchmaking process through specially appointed consultants with particular expertise in the subjects.

MMF from first idea to partnership	
The entrepreneur (applicant)	Local with feasible project looks for a Dutch business partner, submits the forms with additional documents at the Embassy
Local Dutch Embassy	Screens the intake form and the company, if positive, hands over to Agency NL
MMF team Agency NL	With the help of specialists assesses potential. A voucher will be offered to the applicant for assistance of a specialist consultant
Consultant	Helps to establish contacts and meetings with potential Dutch partners. Assists the applicant to arrange a visiting program
Visit program	Applicant meets potential business partners, the consultant makes a follow up plan how to come to a business partnership
External party	Evaluates 6 months after the visit, how the partnership is evolving

Table 8: MMF Partnership process

Interested companies submit a request for the Matchmaking Facility to the Dutch embassy in their countries. The embassy assesses the request with the help of the local network. If the outcome is positive, the embassy sends the request to MMF in the Netherlands. NL Agency then gives the assignment to one of the MMF consultants to start the partner search. The consultant is asked to identify at least three potential Dutch partners for the applicant and then prepares and facilitates the visit to these companies in the Netherlands. Finally, the consultant creates a collective plan of approach for any resulting cooperation agreements.²⁰

"In general, we can say that the consultants who have an interest in the outcome of the business, are sometimes more focused on the business prospective and are weaker on the reporting and facilitating parts process wise, were as the consultants who are more focused on carrying out the process may put less emphasis on the actual outcome of the matchmaking program in terms of business deals." (Frank Buizer, 2013)

Once appointed by Agency NL to a particular MMF project, each consultant can adopt a series of roles along three main implementation processes carried out within the MMF project. The consultants then receive fixed payments upon achievement and submission of preformatted reports for each of these processes (see table 3).

²⁰ <https://www.agentschapnl.nl/sites/default/files/Factsheet%202012%20English.pdf>

Process	Activities
Business case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathers available information about the applicant company • Makes recommendations about the potential in the sector potential partners • Help to prepare business case
Matchmaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies potential partners in the Netherlands and makes a first contact. • Positions the entrepreneur and its business case with the potential partners and • Identifies interests and the expectations for partnerships with the applicant
Visit program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in preparing a visit by the applicant to the Netherlands. (also includes visa's etc.) • Arranges and facilitates and reports on visits and or meetings with the potential Dutch Partners or other organisations or events. • Prepares a follow up plan with the commitment from the applicant and the Dutch firm for further steps within the next months and possible for the next 3 years.

Table 9: Consultant roles per implementation process

2. The role the consultant in the Matchmaking Facility

2.1 The concept of partnership brokering

Partnership brokering is a fairly new concept. The International Business Leaders Forum – *IBLF* - defines *partnership brokerage* as: “establishing strong working relationships between key individuals, form robust partnerships efficiently and effectively, build and consolidate strong working relationships” (IBLF, 2005). A partnership broker acts, thus, as an intermediary between different organizations and sectors, that aim to collaborate as partners in a sustainable development initiative. According to the IBLF’s Brokering guidebook brokers can operate either as ‘internal’ or ‘external’ brokers according to whether they are placed within or outside the partner organizations (IBLF, 2005).

2.2 Consultants of the Matchmaking Facility as ‘partnership brokers’

In the following, it is reflected how consultants deal with expectation management - as ‘partnership brokers’ - in the MMF.

Consultants function as ‘partnership brokers’ between the parties helping partners to work towards creating common goals and long-lasting relationships that could lead to mutually beneficiary partnerships. In particular consultants are faced with managing the differences in expectations from both the MMF applicants and the Dutch company.

Based on the conceptualization of partnership brokers, the Matchmaking Facility’s role can be found to resemble most with the defining characteristics of external brokers²¹. MMF contracts independent consultants or consultancy firms, who have been selected through tender procedures and have

²¹ These definitions are contained in the Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme of the ODI/IBLF

framework agreements with Agency NL. Required expertise areas include: matchmaking experience in the specific sector contracted for, matchmaking experience with companies in developing countries and an ability to demonstrate that business deals have resulted from matchmaking efforts in the past.

Contracted MMF consultants are experts in a field and/or activity directly or indirectly linked to the matchmaking facility. In general, these consultants can be divided in 4 types: private sector investment program consultants, export services consultants, intermediaries and vertical sector experts.

Skills required	In terms of
Business acumen	Understanding visibility and potential of business opportunities and partnering with the specific respective sectors. Understand the sector, have to ability to initiate and steer towards potential goals
Matchmaking skills	Business development and sales
Product management	Managing and carrying out the processes, make sure the different steps are made according to the quality requirements on time with back-up reports
Intercultural communication	Ability to understand the culture differences between the entrepreneurs and their potential Dutch partners
Coaching skills	Ability to coach the entrepreneur through the whole process. Deal with and understand the context in its sector in the Netherlands

Table 10: Consultant skills

Following the literature on partnership brokerage, one can identify that brokering activities within the MMF include: (1) seeding the idea, (2) exploring the feasibility of adopting a partnership approach, (3) inspiring decision makers, (4) facilitating negotiations to develop a partnership, (5) encouraging (and role modeling) behavior, (6) protecting the principles and vision, (7) maintaining or monitoring the effectiveness of partnerships over time. As such, the matchmaking focuses more on supporting and facilitating partnerships and partner development rather than that the final outcome of business deals formed.

3. The challenge of expectation management in the Matchmaking Facility from the perspective of the broker

3.1. Differences in expectations of prospective partners in Matchmaking projects

The two main expectation issues in the matchmaking facility are: (1) contrasting personal expectations between the Dutch and local partners and (2) poor quality of the business proposition. When Dutch entrepreneurs are introduced for the first time to doing business with the prospective country there is a need to adapt to the idea. Failure to provide enough space for the required adaptation results in significant differences of expectations between the Dutch partner and the entrepreneur from the developing country. For instance, the entrepreneur from the developing country expects a profitable business deal shortly after entering business discussions with the Dutch

partner. However, Dutch firms consider the whole process more carefully, and as such they perceive the first phases of business discussions as an introduction to each other and the business idea and an opportunity to get acquainted, while the sought result is relationship building.

On the other hand, the business plans or business propositions of the local entrepreneur are often not tailored to meet the requirements of the Dutch market or sector and, consequently, needs adjustment or further market research (Frank Buizer, 2013). Although it is possible for a local entrepreneur to obtain valuable working knowledge and an understanding of the requirements of the market, the local partner is still generally perceived as failing to address the needs of the project through his business proposition.

A 2012 assessment of the Norwegian Development Agency NORAD of 4 matchmaking programs identified that better appreciation of cultural differences needs to be developed in matchmaking programs. 80% of partnership failure is traced back to "cultural differences" between partners. These differences present themselves along distinct facets such as communication culture, business transparency, mix of private and business spheres, time management, operational routines and lack of respect.

3.2. How do brokers deal with the challenges of expectation management in the Matchmaking Facility

The IBLF's Brokering Guidebook (2005) indicates that a mismatch in partner expectations may lead to:

- Frustration (for both partners and broker)
- Wasting precious resources
- The broker becoming dysfunctional
- The partnership being undermined or even collapsing

Partnership brokers therefore require a set of tools and skills to minimize a mismatch of partner expectations. In dealing with differing expectations, MMF consultants aim to align expectations and perceptions of how the process is to be carried out. For this purpose, they are aided by specially developed tools such as the use of report formats and they follow predetermined producers for project implementation and reporting. In doing so, they are continuously guided by the MMF team through progress conversations.

Tools	In terms of
Business case	Should be provided within 6 weeks and should indicate a potential to meet a Dutch partners.
Matchmaking form	Should be provided 2 weeks before the actual visiting program. The objective of the form is to asses a sufficient number of interesting Dutch companies
Visit program report	Should be provided maximum 4 weeks after the visit has been taken place

Table 11: Consultant tools

Matchmaking consultants highlighted that if both partners are committed and prepared, meetings are more effective and reports as well as follow up plans can be better defined into actions, which signals an appropriate implementation of the matchmaking process. However it is not a guarantee

that a fruitful business deal will result, since the preparation of business cases and the set up of quality meetings may represent challenges, when taking into consideration different levels of expertise or commitment of the applicant and or consultant. As a consequence, the inability to overcome such challenges could severely affect the quality of the relationship and finally the chance of success.

3.3. The role and support from the MMF team of Agency NL

According to the experience of the MMF, a loss of the momentum of the partnering process may lead to decreasing interest from the partners. In turn, this creates challenges for a successful execution of a matchmaking project. As mentioned before, the matchmaking process is managed by the MMF team from Agency NL, who assigns the projects and facilitates the initial contact between the applicant, the corresponding embassy and the hired consultant. The MMF team manages the entire process from business case development to the provision of feedback, which should not exceed 1 year, by means of quality management of the business case formulation and the careful follow up of the prospective reports. This provides the matchmaking team with a mechanism to control the process and grants them the ability to easily address the consultant when a step in the process does not meet the quality or timing requirements.

The management role of the MMF team also entails their involvement in the projects to a certain extent through the promotion and facilitation of progress discussions. Such discussions serve as an opportunity to align and advise consultants, oversee company meetings, assess the degree to which project phases are accomplished, and in some cases, organize company visits. Additionally, the MMF team provides feedback to the consultants on the internal quality of the process.

The roles of the matchmaking team	
Internal project manager	Mainly involved in the liaising activities with clients and the MMF being the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the specific departments within the Agency and external partners
Project management	Focus on the MMF projects, specifically on the management of the management process, overall management of the projects. Reporting and screening the operational activities within the projects
PR promoting role and advisor	Promote the program training within the Agency, the Embassies and external partners. This role has recently changed from a external to an inward promoting role. The coordinators of MMF no longer visit the Embassies but inform the different stakeholders by means of newsletters and phone calls.

Table 12: Roles of the MMF team

4. Conclusion: The changing role of the matchmaking facility

Healthy partnership work towards achieving specific benefits for each partner over and above the common benefits to all partners. Only in this way will a partnership ensure the continuing commitment of partners and therefore be sustainable. But partnerships are complicated. For them to be successful, they need to be developed and managed systematically.

With the new policy agenda on aid, trade and investments, the matchmaking facility and other instruments of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs are expected to become more integrated. The

concept and the idea behind 'partnership brokerage' supports the current policy of the Dutch government that combines trade and development as it promotes multi- stakeholder partnerships as a key mechanism for achieving sustainable development.

For the MMF, the opportunity emerges to enhance the broker role of Dutch agencies and consultants. In this changing role the MMF could add services to its portfolio, such as brokerage training and assessments. This would enhance the capacity of consultants to act as 'partnership brokers' for MMF projects but also builds their capacity to work for other international agencies.

That would mean that nature of the MMF program, shifts towards 'facilitating partnerships' and redirect the objective of the program towards identifying potential partners and helping them build strong relationship. This would require an emphasis on overcoming partner-specific difficulties and challenges related to partnership relationships. This in turn results in a shifting goal from business-deal oriented to partnering process-oriented and leads to benefits for the MMF in the shape of facilitated management and measurement of program progress.

In moving towards a partnership brokering role, the MMF may benefit to include a stronger process perspective. The consultants within the MMF are contracted to support one of the partners or by the partnership as a whole to:

- Explore the feasibility of adopting a partnership approach
- Facilitate negotiations to develop a partnership and/or a partnering agreement
- Maintain or monitor the effectiveness of partnerships over time

4.1. Enhance the capacity consultants and advisors of the matchmaking Facility.

This offers the opportunity to reflect on the role of consultants and MMF team. In their function as 'external brokers', they bring together parties with different cultural background and have to deal with different expectations. Moving towards a partnership brokerage role would require four specific areas, in which the MMF - and in particular its consultants - should develop particular expertise:

- **Facilitation:** To undertake successful convening and relationship building
- **Negotiation:** Help partners meeting each other's underlying interests (win-win-win scenarios).
- **Coaching:** To support and coach individual partners or staff in new skills.
- **Reviewing:** To provide partners with opportunities to reflect on how the partnership is going

One tool to support the process perspective would include applying the partnering cycle to the MMF program. This framework is designed to highlight the progress and complexity of a



partnership over time (IBLF, 2005). It also provides a basis for understanding the changes in management priorities from the partners' viewpoint as their partnership develops.

The partnering cycle framework takes into account phase-specific objectives, pinpoints key tasks and considerations in moving from one partnership phase to the next and addresses how brokers can support performance and development as the partnership moves along the cycle. Applying this cycle to the program would provide, for the partnership broker a manageable assessment framework and a set of clearly defined, internationally standardized services.

4.2. Conclusion

This essay discussed how that the role of the consultants in the Matchmaking Facility can be considered as external 'partnership brokerage'. The role of the matchmaking facility program is about to undergo change. This opportunity could be used to move from a deal oriented towards a more partnership-oriented approach. In doing so, the matchmaking facility could play an important role in the current sustainable development efforts and support the focus on alliances and private partnerships inherent in the current development assistance policy.

This, however, this new role, requires a review and redefinition of the program as well as a set of different skills for consultants and advisors of the matchmaking facility. IBLF's partnering cycle provides a manageable assessment framework that can help the MMF in successfully accomplishing these changes. As a result of applying the framework, a new set of standardised partnership brokering services can be identified, which would make it easier to fulfil a broker's role and manage program progress.

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