

ANNUAL REVIEW OF
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PARTNERSHIPS

2017

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on Cross-Sector Social Interactions

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06. PETER NEERGAARD is professor emeritus in CSR, Copenhagen Business School. He has extensively surveyed cross sector partnerships in a Danish context seen from the point of view of NGOs. He has been a pro bono adviser to NGOs in forming partnerships. His other research interests are communication of CSR and CSR in global supply chains.

07. MATTHEW TAYLOR has been Chief Executive of the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) in the United Kingdom since 2006. Prior to this appointment, he was Chief Adviser on Political Strategy to the Prime Minister, and Director of the Institute for Public Policy Research between 1999 and 2003. He has extensive experience in politics, public policy and organisational leadership. He championed and helped design a major national engagement process in 2003/4 (the Big Conversation) and has long standing interest in civic interaction, social networks and citizen-centred public service reform.

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09. SANDRA WADDOCK is Galligan Chair of Strategy, Carroll School Scholar of Corporate Responsibility, and Professor of Management at Boston College's Carroll School of Management. Author of more than 140 papers and 13 books, she received the 2016 Lifetime Achievement in CSR Award from Humboldt University's International CSR Conference and a PRME Pioneer Award in 2017, among numerous others. Current research interests include memes, narratives, and large system change, today's shaman as difference maker, and management education. Her latest book is *Healing the World* (Greenleaf/Routledge, 2017).

10. SIMON ZADEK is currently Senior Adviser on finance in the Executive Office of the Secretary General and a Co-Director of the "Inquiry into Design Options for a Sustainable Financial System" launched by the United Nations Environment Program in early 2014. He is also DSM Senior Fellow and Visiting Professor at Singapore Management University, where he teaches part of a masters on tri-sector partnership, and is Visiting Fellow at the Oxford Martin School of the University of Oxford, where he is documenting his experience in seeking systemic changes across global financial markets and is exploring how Oxford Martin can better support systemic solution-focused research.

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01. ADOLF ACQUAYE is a Senior Lecturer in Sustainability at Kent Business School, University of Kent, UK. His research focuses on Environmental Sustainability Modelling including Carbon Accounting, Green Supply Chain Management and Life Cycle Assessment. He has published widely on these research areas in leading academic journals. He served as Lead Author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group III and contributed to publishing the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (Chapter 10-Industry); Mitigation of Climate Change 2014.

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04. JILL BOGIE holds a PhD in Business Management and an MPhil in Futures Studies from the University of Stellenbosch Business School, South Africa. She is currently Adjunct Faculty at the Gordon Institute of Business Science at the University of Pretoria. Her research interests include multi-stakeholder collaboration as an issue field and the sustainability agenda for business. She applies research methods that combine narrative inquiry with a theoretical approach known as the communicative constitution of organization (CCO), which is a process view of organizing and organization based on conversation, textual and material agents.

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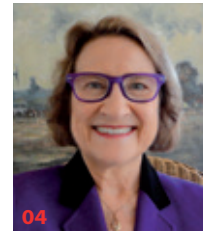
06. GREG CHANT-HALL is Head of Sustainability at Skanska Infrastructure Development. Greg is a passionate sustainability leader with over 20 years' experience delivering sustainable solutions in the built environment sector. He is a huge advocate of common sense, and has most recently become an accredited professional for the WELL Building Standard, linking green buildings with health and wellbeing of those that use them. Greg loves collaborating with partners, and enjoys lecturing, training and generally working with people who want to make a difference.

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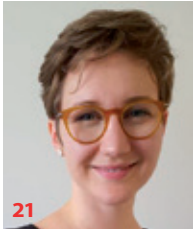
08. JULIA DÍAZ holds a bachelor's degree in computer science and a master's degree in industrial engineering. She is currently a PhD candidate of Management at Universidad de los Andes in Colombia. Her research examines the reasons of small businesses to collaborate with non-profit organizations. She has worked in the public sector in education and also in e-government.

09. MD NAZMUL HASAN is a Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Strategic Management at the University of Northampton, UK. Prior to that, he was a Dean's Scholar and Visiting Lecturer in Management at Royal Holloway, University of London. Hasan also holds academic appointment (Teaching and Research Associate) in the UCL School of Management, University College London (UCL). His current research (fully funded by Royal Holloway and Santander UK) focuses on understanding environmental responsibility in small and medium-sized polluting firms in developing countries.

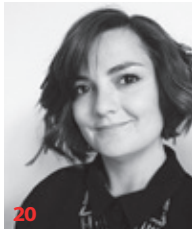
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13. SUSANNA KISLENKO is a Doctoral Student at IESE Business School in Barcelona, Spain. Her research interests lie at the intersection of leadership, cross-sector motivation and founder identity. Prior to pursuing doctoral studies, Susanna spent over 12 years in the non-profit sector in Canada, holding a number of leadership roles in social service organizations. This experience instilled in Susanna the understanding that positive social change only happens at the crossroads of non-profit, for-profit and government and it is now her mission in life to support the leaders that work at these crossroads all over the world.

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26. M. MAY SEITANIDI (FRSA), Founding Editor-in-Chief of the ARSP, is Associate Professor of Strategy and Director of the PhD Programme at Kent Business School, University of Kent. She has published extensively on CSSPs in academic journals as well as popular press. May, one of the recipients of ARSP Honors List

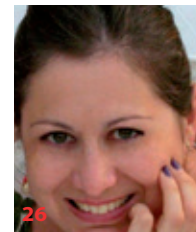
Certificate, is the founder and coordinator of the biennial CSSI Symposia Series at leading universities around the world. Her work for over 20 years, as a practitioner and academic, has focused on all types of cross-sector social interactions, previously on philanthropy and socio-sponsorship and currently on social partnerships across geographic contexts.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Full Term	Explanation
ARSP	<i>Annual Review of Social Partnerships*</i>	The ARSP is the free online journal on cross-sector social interactions that you are currently reading.
AOM	<i>Academy of Management*</i>	The AOM is the preeminent professional association for scholars dedicated to the advancement of management.
BoP	Base of the Pyramid / Bottom of the Pyramid	The term BoP refers to the largest, but poorest, socio-economic group.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	The CEO is the most senior corporate officer in charge of managing a for-profit or nonprofit organization.
CSP / CSSP	Cross-Sector Partnership / Cross-Sector Social Partnership	The term CSP indicates a (social) partnership between actors from the business, public, and/or civil society sectors. The terms CSP and CSSP are here used synonymously.
CSSI	Cross-Sector Social Interactions	This term was introduced at the first International Scoping Symposium on cross-sector interactions in 2007. It responds to the need for a distinctive and 'un-charged' term that provides a wide enough spectrum to encompass past practices, as well as future ones, emerging at the intersection of the business, public, and civil society sectors.
CR / CSR	Corporate Responsibility / Corporate Social Responsibility	CR / CSR denotes a concept and practice whereby companies voluntarily integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. Overall, the term refers to a company's responsibility for its impacts on society. The terms CR and CSR are here used synonymously.
DJSI	<i>Dow Jones Sustainability Indices*</i>	The DJSI are a family of indices evaluating the sustainability performance of the largest 2,500 companies listed on the Dow Jones Global Total Stock Market Index.
FTSE4GOOD	<i>FTSE4GOOD*</i>	The FTSE4Good Index Series are ethical investment stock market indices that the FTSE Group launched in 2001. They are designed to measure the performance of companies demonstrating strong environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices.

**All words in italics throughout the ARSP incorporate hyperlinks directly linking to original sources for more information.*

Acronym	Full Term	Explanation
HR	Human Resources	HR relates to the set of individuals who make up an organization's workforce. The term is often also used for an organization's division focused on employee-related activities.
ISO 14001	<i>ISO Standard for Environmental Management Systems*</i>	The ISO standard sets the criteria for an environmental management system. It does not state specific requirements for environmental performance, but maps out a framework that an organization can follow to set up an effective environmental management system.
ISO 26000	<i>ISO Standard for Social Responsibility*</i>	This standard provides guidance on how organizations can operate in a socially responsible way; that is, acting in an ethical and transparent way that contributes to the health and welfare of society.
MDG	<i>Millennium Development Goal*</i>	The United Nations MDGs involved eight development goals set for 2015, on which all countries and leading development institutions had agreed.
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	An MoU is a partnering agreement that partner organizations enter into voluntarily.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization	An NGO is a nonprofit organization (hence it is neither part of a government, nor a for-profit business) that excludes government representatives from its membership.
NPO	Nonprofit Organization	An NPO is an organization serving a charitable purpose, such as education, culture, religion, health, society, or sports, and raises funds to serve the social good rather than to profit individuals.
PPP	Public-Private Partnership	A PPP is a type of CSSP between companies and public sector organizations / governments, often focused on infrastructure development and public services.
SA8000	<i>Social Accountability International / SA8000 Standard*</i>	SA8000 is an auditable certification standard that encourages organizations to develop, maintain, and apply socially acceptable practices in the workplace.

ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Full Term	Explanation
SDG	<i>Sustainable Development Goals*</i>	The SDGs are an intergovernmental set of 17 goals to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change. The SDGs build on the MDGs and have been adopted by world leaders at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
SIM	<i>Social Issues in Management*</i>	The term SIM describes a field of study that, initially focused on social problems and corporate disasters, later developed streams of research and theory on the relationships between business and society, and the contributions each can make to a better quality of life for all people. Further, SIM denotes a special interest group formed within the AOM in 1972, which is interested in the exploration and analysis of various environmental and stakeholder impacts on the organization and the organization's effect on stakeholders.
UN	<i>United Nations*</i>	The UN is an international organization of countries set up in 1945 to promote international peace, security, and cooperation.
UN PRME	<i>UN Principles for Responsible Management Education*</i>	The PRME is the first organized relationship between the UN and business schools, with the PRME Secretariat housed in the UN Global Compact Office. The PRME's mission is to globally inspire and champion responsible management education, research, and thought leadership on the basis of six core principles.
UNGC	<i>United Nations Global Compact*</i>	The UNGC is a United Nations strategic policy initiative for businesses committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption.

This list was compiled by Lea Stadler with helpful feedback by Jennifer Leigh, May Seitani, and Arno Kourula. Our goal is to achieve clarity and facilitate the development of collectively agreed definitions that will help us avoid misunderstandings and facilitate communication between academics and practitioners. In the process of collectively extending and improving this document we would much welcome your comments. Please contact [Lea.Stadler\(at\)grenoble-em.com](mailto:Lea.Stadler(at)grenoble-em.com)

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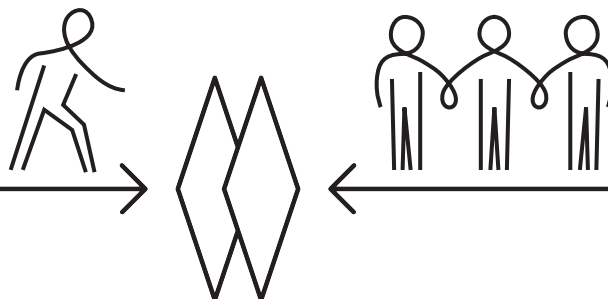
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By Verena Bitzer
*Senior Advisor, KIT Royal Tropical
 Institute, Amsterdam & Senior
 Researcher, Maastricht University,
 the Netherlands*

Pushing the Boundaries of Partnerships

Is partnership a buzzword or a powerful mechanism to address societal questions that cannot be resolved by a single player? For many, it may still be a bit of both. Some emphasise the innovative potential of partnerships, whereas others point to the inherent difficulties of partnering effectively. Indeed, partnerships are great in theory, but in practice, they're hard work and success does not come easily. Crafting the sort of collaborative society that we would like to see still requires further strides to be made, especially by sharing learnings and building on each other's insights (yes, this includes the failures).

For us at the Annual Review of Social Partnerships, this is our constant driver: setting the global benchmark on bridging partnership theory and practice by means of innovative and boundary-spanning knowledge sharing, knowledge co-creation, and knowledge curation. With every issue, we aim to expand the boundaries of cross-sector partnerships (CSPs) a little bit further – with regard to the practice, pedagogy and theory of partnerships.

Let's take a sneak preview at some of the contributions of this year's issue.

In the **Pedagogy Section**, one of the focus areas includes the kinds of competencies needed to collaborate successfully in CSPs. It is increasingly clear that those involved in partnership processes require a specific set of skills and competencies which allow individuals to navigate a complex setting characterised by diverse and potentially conflicting interests, perspectives, and objectives held by the partnering organisations. Although there is no 'one size fits all' approach to become successful partnership practitioners, the framework developed by Adriane MacDonald and Lea Stadtler entails a precise overview of four interrelated skills – interpersonal, communication, entrepreneurial and systems thinking – needed to traverse the different dimensions of CSPs.

In the **Publication Section**, John Bryson (interview by Stella Pfisterer) specifies that, in addition to these different capacities and competencies, partnerships require legitimacy and a clear focus on the public value in order to be successful rather than merely serving the individual objectives of partnering organisations. The tricky part, of course, is that partnerships aiming to address complex problems face inherent uncertainty and ambiguity, where decisions have to be made and no obvious technical answers are available. As such, Bryson states that partnerships are not an easy answer to hard problems – they are hard answers to hard problems.

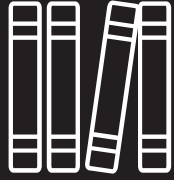
A standardised approach to partnerships may therefore be neither possible nor desirable, writes Bimal Arora in the **Community Section**. Given the wide variety of issues that partnerships are confronted with and seek to address, he advocates for a renewed focus on creating strong ties among the designers, shapers and stakeholders of partnerships to ensure better adherence to collectively developed procedural rules. Building social capital within partnerships may yield better results and

counteract the waning hopes and excitement around the potential of partnerships.

How relationships within partnerships play out is not only a matter of how they are designed and what skills the participating actors bring to the table – it is also fundamentally a question of leadership. This is the central theme of this year's **Praxis Section**. Lucian Hudson and Neil Britto introduce the Section and draw attention to the diverse characteristics of leadership in CSPs: it needs to inspire building confidence across sectors and nurture trust; it requires embracing complexity and capacity to steer through diverse norms and cultures of multiple sectors; and demands a persistent focus on the public problem. The different contributions in the Praxis Section each reveal a different facet of leadership relating the efficacy of CSPs.

Being able to communicate across sectors, and sometimes across different worldviews, is equally important. This not only holds for those directly engaged in partnerships, but also for those who do research on partnerships, argues Stephen Khan (interview by Lauren McCarthy) in the **Research Section**. In order for research to enlarge its practical relevance, he invites researchers to make use of simple tricks, such as asking themselves what part of their research is interest to the wider public, using examples to illustrate their ideas, and embedding their research in compelling stories. Innovative participatory research methods are also clearly important to generate impactful knowledge on CSPs, Marijn Faling and colleagues write in another contribution to the Research Section.

Many more interesting insights await in all the Sections of this year's ARSP. I hope they inspire, educate, motivate and empower you to promote the social good through cross-sector collaboration.



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PUBLICATIONS

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From Compilation to Insights

by José Carlos Marques

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It is my pleasure to introduce the publications section of the 12th ARSP. As in previous years, we aim to provide an overview of the diverse, ever-expanding literature on CSSPs published in the previous 18 months or so – a literature characterized by varied terminology, perspectives and disciplinary lenses. We compile this section by searching academic databases and Google Scholar, requesting contributions from academic listservs and conducting systematic reviews of specific journals. Though we make every effort to be as inclusive of as many perspectives, sub-disciplines and publications as possible, the following list of journal articles, chapters, books, reports and theses, is not a comprehensive account. While we've likely not captured all that has been written on CSSPs in the past year, we hope that this overview provides a broad snapshot of the state of the art for those of you already familiar with research on the topic... and a useful springboard for those of you that are diving into the literature.

In the following sub-sections, the publications team offer synthesis contributions that summarize recent research and writing on the topic of CSSPs in various streams – Stella Pfisterer provides an overview of NGO-government partnerships research, Salla Laasonen summarizes writing on the NGO-business dimension, and I review the public sector perspective, concentrating on government-business partnerships. Lamberto Zollo rounds out the syntheses with a “pracademic” perspective that provides insight into practitioner writing on CSSPs. We also feature excerpts of an interview that Stella Pfisterer conducted

with John Bryson, the McKnight Presidential Professor of Planning and Public Affairs at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. Professor Bryson, a pioneer in the study of CSSPs, speaks about his latest books and shares his thoughts on how public and collective institutions can safeguard the growing threats to liberal democracies.

While considerable insight can be gleaned from the following pages, one aspect that clearly stands out for me are the discrepancies between CSSP conceptualization and practice, and the growing political tensions around collaborative forms of governance. While such partnerships continue to be touted by some scholars, policy-makers and companies as one of the most innovative solutions to social and environmental problems, there is a glaring lack of evidence regarding their effectiveness, particularly at the transnational level. Equally important, is the recent evolution in the political landscape, which is leading to increasing levels of skepticism regarding open and inclusive forms of governance in many countries. While this suggests a response premised on the continued promotion of democratic and collaborative forms of governance, it also underscores the need for greater awareness of the discrepancies between the aspirational/normative and empirical/political dimensions of our writing on CSSPs. Clearly, such entities are not a politics-free zone and should not be conceptualized as such. Their capacity to deliver innovative outcomes, shared value, and their very existence, should not be taken for granted. As a community of scholars interested in CSSPs, it seems to me that the truly challenging work is just beginning.



by Stella Pfisterer

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Partnering with Public Actors from a Civil Society Perspective: The Tension Between Service Delivery and Advocacy

Scholars aim to understand varied relationships between civil society organisations (CSOs) and public actors by investigating how such collaborations work, what facilitates or hampers successful partnerships¹ and what the implications for CSOs' strategies, identity and management are. In *ARSP 10* (2015), my review of the academic literature on cross-sector partnerships (CSP) from a civil society perspective already highlighted the challenging relationship between CSOs and governments². During this year's review, my attention was similarly drawn to the tension between service delivery and advocacy in CSO-government relationships highlighted by numerous researchers. Publications discuss the divergent positions of governments towards CSOs. On the one hand,

government rules can set restrictions for CSOs, particularly related to lobbying and political activism³. On the other hand, a service provision role of CSOs in implementing policies is frequently facilitated by government rules (e.g. case studies in Russia⁴ and Bangladesh⁵).

The advocacy role of NGOs can be supported through international cross-sector collaboration, as highlighted in the case of Ecuador, where participation in a multi-stakeholder platform allowed NGOs to influence political debates on water governance⁶. However, a case study of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative demonstrated that despite their participation in the multi-stakeholder initiative with donor support, NGOs find it more and more difficult to exercise a political role in authoritarian countries⁷.

CSO-government relationships are characterized by a tension between service provision and critical advocacy.

In an international aid context, the relationship between CSOs and public aid donors, such as USAID, also seems to be characterised by a service delivery focus. A study in Cambodia revealed that professionalized NGOs (those with more trained and educated staff) and rationalized NGOs (those with more extensive monitoring and evaluation regimes) are more likely to receive foreign aid because the service delivery approach provides legitimacy for NGOs⁸. Similarly, Thörn's study emphasises how donors shape CSOs' activities, encouraging them to become competitive service providers, use evidence-based methods and produce measurable results⁹. However, which role CSOs can play in the relationship with aid donors, may depend on the domain in which they are active. A study in the environmental context, for instance, revealed that the relationships between environmental NGOs and aid donors are only rarely characterised service provision¹⁰.

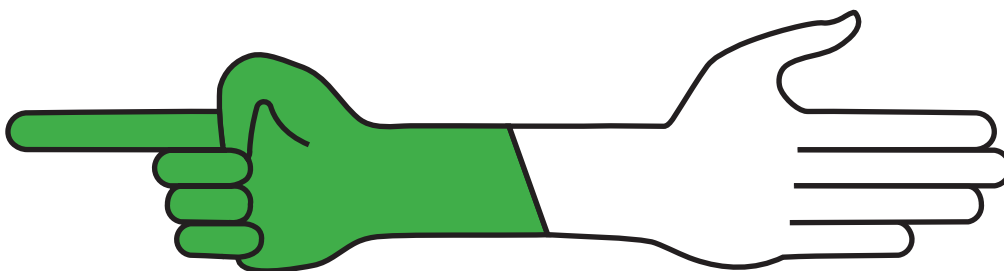
CSOs' two roles are often separated and discussed as being of 'dual' nature; while they may be considered 'insiders' in a service provision relationship with the government, they may take on an 'outsider' role when campaigning against the same government¹¹. A study of such a 'straddler' organisation operating in Indonesia highlights the potential of such arrangements to span the state-civil society divide

to achieve development objectives¹². The Indonesian case also reveals, somewhat ironically, that NGOs develop hierarchical relationships towards community groups similar to those they have with their donors¹³.

To conclude, the reviewed articles highlight how CSO-government relationships are often characterised by a tension between service provision and critical advocacy. Relationships between public aid donors and CSOs seem to exhibit a similar phenomenon. Unfortunately, separating service provision and advocacy creates an obstacle to the exploration of synergies between different roles. A better understanding of this tension and its implications for partnering requires more research on possible factors that influences its emergence and management (e.g. the institutional and political context, power imbalances and resource dependencies). As such, the search for synergy between service delivery and civil society advocacy in CSO-government partnerships is an interesting research area to be explored by future partnership research. Such insights both provide CSOs with a greater awareness and understanding of the operational and strategic tensions they may face and shed light on how to manage these.

Endnotes

1. **Hushie et al.**, 2016; **AbouAssi et al.**, 2016
2. **Pfisterer**, 2015
3. **Benevolenski & Toepler**, 2017; **Öge**, 2016
4. **Benevolenski & Toepler**, 2017
5. **Gulshana et al.**, 2016
6. **Hoogesteger**, 2016
7. **Öge**, 2016
8. **Suarez & Gugerty**, 2016
9. **Thörn**, 2016
10. **Guillet & Lemenager**, 2016
11. **McGhee et al.**, 2016
12. **Yumasdaleni & Jakimov**, 2016
13. **Yumasdaleni & Jakimov**, 2016





by Salla Laasonen
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Paradox, Hybrid Logics and Creative Tension Characterizing Business- Nonprofit Collaboration

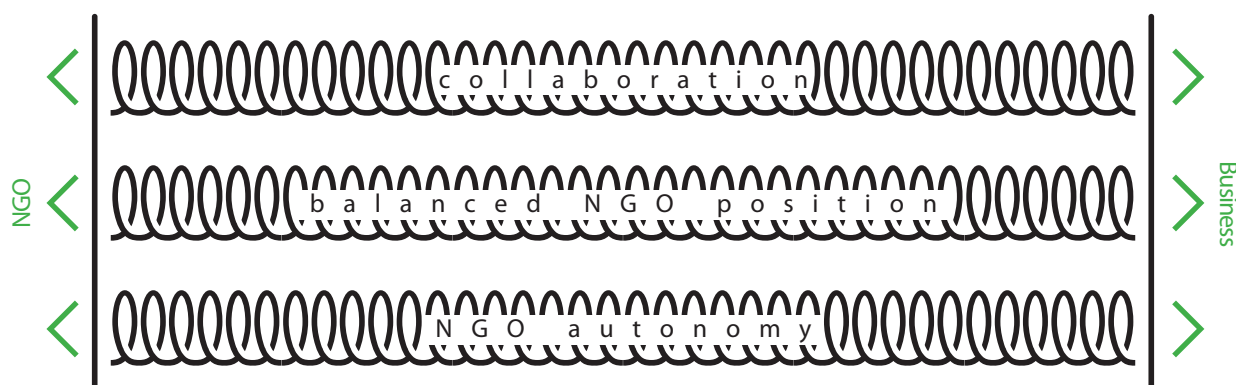
Companies and non-profit organizations have traditionally been seen as odd bedfellows. However, the acknowledgement, acceptance and resolution of conflict as a generative, positive, societal force, continues to gain research attention and has become one of the main thematic drivers of research on business-NGO partnerships. This applies to both conceptualizations and methodological approaches.

Concepts such as plurality¹, coopetition², and tensions in institutional logics³ are among the recent approaches applied to the analysis of partnerships. Similarly, hybridity and social value are at the centre of recent theoretical advances in the field. For instance, Quélin, Kivleniece and Lazzarini⁴ develop a conceptual framework on theoretical mechanisms that lead to economic and social value in different forms of cross-sector arrangements. One of the most useful distinctions that the authors build on is the differentiation between hybridity in both logics and governance. Similarly, Wassmer, Pain and Paquin⁵ identify and classify three main types of environmental partnerships that are relevant to the dividing line between hybridity and partnership as an organizational form: innovation-seeking, legitimacy-building, and policy-influencing partnerships. Similarly, a paradox approach that highlights tensions is gaining popularity within the literature⁶. Based on a Nigerian case study, Idemudia⁷ argues that creative tension serves three functions in partnerships – it enables the collaboration itself; it prevents NGOs from taking

extreme positions; and it allows NGOs to keep a critical distance from the business partner, an aspect essential to NGOs' autonomy.

In terms of methodological approaches, the call for quantitative studies and larger data sets⁸ is receiving responses that also emphasize partnership tensions. Based on a dataset of project-level partnership ties between 1,312 organizations in the carbon-offset market, Ashraf, Ahmadsimad and Pinkse⁹ find that sharing compatible institutional logics is imperative to the survival of cross-sector partnerships, while dependence on each other's resources is of lesser importance. Similarly, Barroso-Mendez and colleagues¹⁰ find that shared values between business and non-profit partners increases trust and commitment in partnerships. In addition to an increasing number of quantitative studies, qualitative single and multiple case studies continue to have space in the literature. Cloutier and Langley¹¹ focus on the moral aspects and how partners deal with differences in purpose to define collaborative processes. Lange et al¹². conceptualize the process of how multi-national corporations (MNCs) and NGOs can proceed from foes to friends, by identifying three types of enabling processes; future gazing, good communication systems, and coordinated change. The role of learning, language, and knowledge sharing also remains a focus¹³.

Partnerships and the tensions that surround them is also a common theme within the critical CSR literature¹⁴. Beddewela and Fairbass¹⁵ identify how the company motivation to partner with an NGO is driven by external



pressure, and they offer a critical assessments of the role of CSR in different various partnerships. Similarly, multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs)¹⁶ and industry specific voluntary governance mechanisms are in essence forms of, or build upon, cross-sector collaboration. In terms of partnership terminology, inclusive business, impact investing and frugal innovation are terms that often build on cross-sector arrangements, and also fall into the Base of the Pyramid (BoP) discourse. Partnerships and BoP initiatives align to

Although studying tensions as a positive force is providing useful insights for partnership practitioners, assessing the societal impact of partnerships remains a challenge for future research.

a large extent, and can also be seen in related studies¹⁷. Community resilience and natural disasters¹⁸, Fair Trade¹⁹, Humanitarian-business partnerships²⁰, health and social service²¹, mining, oil and gas, and company-community agreements²² are among the recent research context and topics. Stephan and colleagues²³ provide an informative review on positive social change, in which partnerships play a critical role.

Although studying tensions as a positive force is providing useful insights for partnership practitioners, assessing the

societal impact of partnerships remains a challenge for future research. While the benefits that accrue to the parties involved in the partnership is the focus of the majority of studies, the broader societal benefits are often in the background as an implicit outcome²⁴. The explicit societal benefits – and the impact and measurement thereof – need to be brought to the foreground. Consequently, this remains a future research challenge, as pointed out by a recent special issue on enhancing the impact or cross-sector partnerships²⁵. This is a challenge that provides ample motivation for continued research in the field.

Endnotes

1. **Grosser**, 2016
2. **Dorn et al.**, 2016; **Stadtler & van Wassenhove**, 2016
3. **Bishop & Waring**, 2016; **Nicholls & Huybrechts**, 2016
4. **Quelin et al.**, 2017
5. **Wassmer et al.**, 2017
6. See e.g. **Stadtler & van Wassenhove**, 2017; **Sharma & Bansal**, 2017
7. **Idemudia**, 2017
8. **Branzei & Le Ber**, 2014
9. **Ashraf et al.**, 2017
10. **Barroso-Mendez et al.**, 2016
11. **Cloutier & Langley**, 2017
12. **Lange et al.**, 2016
13. **Galvão Lyra et al.**, 2017
14. **Rim et al.**, 2016; **Kourula & Delialex**, 2016
15. **Beddewela & Fairbass**, 2016
16. **Baumann-Pauly et al.**, 2017
17. **Duke**, 2016; **Hart et al.**, 2016; **Herrera**, 2016; **Nahi**, 2016; **Reficco & Gutierrez**, 2016; **Halme et al.**, 2016
18. **McKnight & Linnenluecke**, 2016
19. **Nicholls & Huybrechts**, 2016
20. **Nurmala et al.**, 2017
21. **Shier & Handy** 2016; **Villiani et al.**, 2017
22. **Keenan et al.**, 2016
23. **Stephan et al.**, 2016
24. **Dentoni et al.**, 2016; **Kolk et al.**, 2016; **Lyakhov & Gliedt**, 2016; **Ryan & O'Malley**, 2016; **Villiani et al.**, 2017; **Stadtler**, 2016a
25. **Van Tulder et al.**, 2016; **Kolk et al.**, 2016; **Dentoni et al.**, 2016; **Gutierrez et al.**, 2016; **Stadtler**, 2016b



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The Public-Private Governance Nexus: New Perspectives on MSI Performance and State Agency

In recent years, writing on private and collaborative governance has taken a progressively “public turn”, characterized by a more evaluative, at times critical, tone of non-state schemes. This tendency has continued this past year, with conspicuous critiques of multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) and public-private partnerships (PPPs), arguments underscoring the indispensable role played by public actors, and a push for a more macro perspective on the role of private actors in governance.

A number of scholars have argued that despite the continued enthusiasm for MSIs in policy and academic circles, our ability to assess their performance remains

rudimentary and their effectiveness in addressing social and environmental challenges remains unproven¹. Pattberg and Widerberg, for example, argue that although “recent studies find little evidence for positive performance... [MSIs] popularity only seems to increase”². A growing stream of research supports this claim – failed or ambiguous outcomes have been documented by a series of studies of MSI and PPP schemes intended to improve labor standards³, safeguard coral reefs⁴, slow deforestation⁵ and enable development⁶. In addition to concerns over assessment and ineffectiveness, the purported ability for MSIs to overcome the democratic legitimacy deficit via inclusive organizational structures and processes has also been challenged⁷.

LOOKING THROUGH THE ACADEMIC GLASS

Recent research also underscores public actors' crucial role, which continues to span the "collaboration-confrontation" continuum I have alluded to in *previous issues* of the ARSP⁸. From a collaborative standpoint, some have argued that synergistic governance across public, social and private spheres is more likely when governments facilitate, orchestrate and legitimate initiatives⁹. Such interactions have been analyzed in contexts as diverse as CSR in industrial clusters¹⁰, supply chain conflict minerals initiatives¹¹ and desertification prevention schemes in China¹².

A number of scholars have argued that despite the continued enthusiasm for MSIs in some policy and academic circles, their effectiveness in addressing social and environmental challenges remains unproven."

A second strand along this continuum argues that states occupy a much more essential role than the literature to date has suggested. In reality, global governance initiatives "rely increasingly on the enforcement and coercive regulatory power of the nation state"¹³ and most MSIs are in truth state-led and likely not viable without government support¹⁴. As a result, Political CSR (PCSR) and Non-State Market Driven (NSMD) theorists, which have posited non-state actors' potential to address governance deficits resulting from globalization processes, have recently acknowledged the need for a more nuanced conceptualization of state authority. For example, Scherer, Rasche, Pallazo and Spicer concede that "...the debate on PCSR might have been too skeptical with regards to governmental regulation both on a national and international level and too much focused on soft-law initiatives and the significance of private authority"¹⁵.

Further along this continuum lies evidence of more confrontational forms of state agency and a public sector that has grown increasingly assertive over matters relating to regulation and governance. Numerous papers document how states have begun to reclaim their regulatory space, threatening private initiatives and reclaiming governance authority¹⁶. These argue that public actors support MSIs when they serve their policy interests but assert public authority when they do not. This latter point suggests the need to disaggregate "government" into its multiple levels, agencies and units¹⁷, and prompts a number of questions that are ripe for research, including "who within the state?"¹⁸

Finally, scholarship on the topic has continued to emphasize the need for a more holistic perspective on cross-sector social interactions. Drawing on concepts such as multi-level governance¹⁹, polycentric governance²⁰, meta-governance²¹ and regulation of regulators²², authors from various disciplines have established the need for multiple levels of analysis and a more expansive time horizon. As a whole, these studies suggest the need for managers and policy-makers to consider how individual initiatives contribute to broader governance efforts and how these evolve over time.

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1. **Van Tulder et al.**, 2016
2. **Pattberg, & Widerberg**, 2016
3. **Marques**, 2016
4. **Bloomfield & Schleifer**, 2017
5. **Gupta et al.**, 2016
6. **Stadtler**, 2016
7. **Hussain & Moriarty**, 2016; **Sabadoz & Singer**, 2017
8. **Marques**, 2016, 2015, 2014
9. **Abbott**, 2017; **Zeyen, et al.**, 2016; **Morgan et al.**, 2016
10. **Gereffi & Lee**, 2016
11. **Reinecke & Ansari**, 2016
12. **Yang**, 2016
13. **Schrempf-Stirling**, 2016
14. **Pattberg & Winderberg**, 2016; **Rubinstein**, 2016
15. **Scherer et al.**, 2016
16. **Adolf et al.**, 2016; **Burns et al.**, 2016; **Foley & Havice**, 2016; **Mills**, 2016; **Tosun et al.**, 2016
17. **Marques, J.C.**, 2016a
18. **Giessen et al.**, 2016
19. **Purnomo et al.**, 2016
20. **Berardo & Lubell**, 2016
21. **Albareda & Waddock**, 2016
22. **Cafaggi**, 2016



by Lamberto Zollo
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Value Co-creation and Social Innovation for Cross-Sector Partnerships' Long-term Success: Insights from the "Pracademic" World

Drawing on recent practitioner-focused articles and reports, this essay highlights recent writing on cross-sector partnerships' (CSPs) challenges and opportunities as well as their evolving role in the global socio-economic sphere¹. Analysis and commentary over this past year emphasized partners' ability to dynamically co-create social value by coping with their individual differences and developing a sustainable alignment of organizational cultures. The following paragraphs summarize four key themes: partners' dynamic capabilities, knowledge sharing, shared culture, and contribution to socio-economic growth.

Numerous articles continue to suggest that CSPs are one of the most innovative solutions to economic, social, and environmental problems, thanks to the synergies created by the integration of different societal actors' resources and capacities². The latter, recently referred to as "dynamic

capabilities for stakeholder orientation"³, are crucial for an effective and "active" collaboration among partners. Capabilities have been described in a variety of ways including the following: (1) identifying stakeholders' needs, perspectives, and potentially conflicting differences in a constructive way⁴; (2) strengthening interactions and relations with stakeholders through both informal and formal mechanisms aimed at short- and long-term common objectives⁵; (3) adaptively learning from stakeholders to incorporate the different actors' know-how and culture in conjoint partnering procedures⁶; and (4) dynamically co-creating social innovation thanks to stakeholders' propensity toward continuous change and adaptation. Capability complementarity and a shared orientation are understood as key to making the "right choices" that lead to value creation and social innovation⁷. According to *World Vision International* and *The Partnering*

LOOKING THROUGH THE ACADEMIC GLASS

Initiative, achieving capability development requires aligning partners' collaborative approaches and actions via a sustainable partnership platform⁸, defined as "an ongoing mechanism to catalyze collaboration for development in a systematic way"⁹.

One of the most critical issues for CSPs concerns the need to monitor and assess partnership efficiency and effectiveness on an ongoing basis¹⁰. For this reason, scholars have recently proposed four types of 'knowledge' necessary for sustainable CSP value co-creation and social innovation¹¹. First, the know-what refers to non-profit civil society actors' knowledge about local effective best practices within a specific context. Second, the know-how addresses the ability to co-create value and achieve innovative solutions in unfamiliar cultural contexts. Experiential knowledge of this sort has to be progressively developed by all the involved partners aiming at inclusive growth. Next, the know-who stresses the need for partners to gain institutional legitimacy within foreign contexts, thus increasing social ties with local actors thanks to effective knowledge transfer and acquisition. Finally, the know-why highlights the importance of partners' persistent engagement with the original CSP social purposes, which assumes a critical role for the long-term sustainability and the effective knowledge exchange of the partnership. These different types of knowledge development and management help to define key elements of good CSP practices, as outlined by The Partnering Initiative¹²: (a) equity, which refers to recognizing the vital contribution of each partner by respecting its voice in common decision-making processes; (b) transparency, i.e. partners' fairness and honesty during the collaboration in order to create an atmosphere of common trust and mutual accountability; (c) mutual benefit, referring to partners' openness to constant risk and benefit-sharing by regularly working together toward each partner's goal.

Finally, it has been suggested that the pursuit of value co-creation and social innovation will likely result in the emergence of a "third" or "hybrid" organizational culture¹³. More specifically, this means that partners have to move beyond their organization-specific culture and embrace each actor's particular cultural style and set of values¹⁴. This 'fusion' of partners' cultures may result in a number of advantages, as recently delineated by the Corporate Partnership Strategy of the *World Food Programme*¹⁵:

stronger potential for innovative and transformational solutions; participatory and fully informed decision-making; wider potential for influence and advocacy; stronger general accountability and mutual learning¹⁶. As such, this "hybrid" organizational culture, which simultaneously integrates and supersedes each partner's capacities, allows partners to transform idiosyncratic differences into long-term sustainable opportunities.

The pursuit of value co-creation and social innovation will likely result in the emergence of a "third" or "hybrid" organizational culture.

Overall, these pracademic perspectives emphasize the need for CSPs to constantly monitor the partners' knowledge-sharing and their progress in developing the capabilities required to co-create value and innovative solutions for society. This is essential to meet Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: "Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development", based upon the mobilization and sharing of knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources by different, yet complementary partners.

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1. The 'pracademic' perspective of this contribution refers to bridging perspectives that equally address, or move back and forth between, academic and practitioner communities.
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3. **Dentoni et al.**, 2016
4. **Kramer & Pfitzer**, 2016
5. **Voss & Biletta**, 2016
6. **Reid**, 2016
7. **Shumate et al.**, 2016
8. **World Vision International & The Partnering Initiative**, 2016
9. **Freeman et al.**, 2016, p.5
10. **Van Tulder et al.**, 2016
11. **Mirvis et al.**, 2016
12. **Reid**, 2016
13. **Reid**, 2016
14. **Albrechtsen**, 2017
15. **World Food Programme**, 2014
16. **Brum et al.**, 2017

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JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ETHICS, Special Issue. Editors: van Tulder, R., Seitanidi, M. M., Crane, A. & Brammer, S. "Special section on Enhancing the Impact of Cross-sector Partnerships (articles 1-5)", (2016, Volume 135, Issue 1). Available from: <http://link.springer.com/journal/10551/135/1/page/1>

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BOGIE, J. 2017. *A communicative approach towards an understanding of multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration as an issue field: Perspectives from sustainable seafood supply chain initiatives in an emerging market.* University of Stellenbosch Business School, Stellenbosch University. Available from: <http://scholar.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.1/100169>

Abstract: This thesis aims to develop a greater understanding of how organisations from different sectors engage with multiple stakeholders so that the collaborative interactions and relationships create value and mutual benefits for all stakeholders and for the sustainability issue; and how continuity of the value creation process is sustained and developed. The study examined the experience of those individuals and organisations that are already achieving some success in working collaboratively to address sustainability issues. The setting for the research was multi-stakeholder cross-sector collaboration (MsCsC) directed towards sustainable seafood in South Africa. MsCsC is conceived as an issue field, which differs from the dominant focus in the literature where there is a partnership entity or organisation. Applying a communicative theoretical lens, an adapted interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to conduct the research analysis and present a conceptual framework of value creation in MsCsC. The research contribution is a refinement of a pre-existing theoretical approach to value creation, where cross-sector partnership is conceived as a separate organisational entity. The research outcome is a new framework of value creation that has been adapted and extended to the context of MsCsC as an issue field.

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Abstract: Global production chains have exacerbated social and environmental issues and eroded governments' regulatory capacity. Non-government organizations (NGOs) and corporations have responded by forming a variety of regulatory coalitions to create codes of conduct, standards, and certification schemes. The most common coalitional forms are multi-stakeholder ini-

tiatives (MSIs), comprising NGOs and corporations, and business-led initiatives (BLIs), composed exclusively of corporations. Despite the proliferation of such coalitions, we know little about their antecedents, interactions and organizational strategies. This thesis studies the strategic and organizational dimensions of transnational private regulation from a longitudinal, comparative perspective, explaining why and how it has evolved into a fragmented system characterized by a contentious movement-counter-movement dynamic. It provides answers to two questions: why do firms adopt different coalitional strategies in response to similar socio-political pressures, and what strategies do MSI and BLI coalitions employ? The research setting is the development of private regulation targeting sweatshops in the global apparel industry. The findings of this thesis challenge the prevailing view that reputational risk and legitimacy concerns explain the choice of coalitional partner and coalitions' strategies. Rather, they uncover strategic drivers and organizing mechanisms unexplored in current research on firm responses to activist pressures. This thesis also contributes to practice and policy by providing greater clarity and guidance to firms, NGOs, and policy-makers concerned with the regulatory complexity increasingly characterizing global supply chains.

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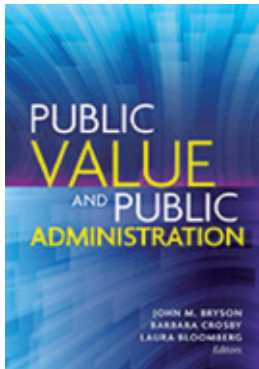
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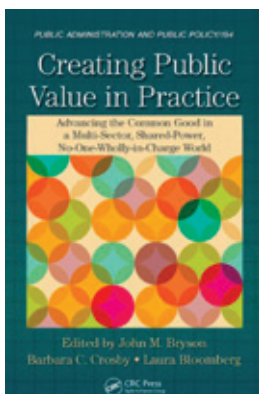
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Co-winner of the American Society for Public Administration, Section on Public Administration Research's best book award

"Governments and nonprofits exist to create public value. Yet what does that mean in theory and practice? This new volume brings together key experts in the field to offer unique, wide-ranging answers. From the United States, Europe, and Australia, the contributors focus on the creation, meaning, measurement, and assessment of public value in a world where government, nonprofit organizations, business, and citizens all have roles in the public sphere. In so doing, they demonstrate the intimate link between ideas of public value and public values and the ways scholars theorize and measure them. They also add to ongoing debates over what public value might mean, the nature of the most important public values, and how we can practically apply these values. The collection concludes with an extensive research and practice agenda conceived to further the field and mainstream its ideas."

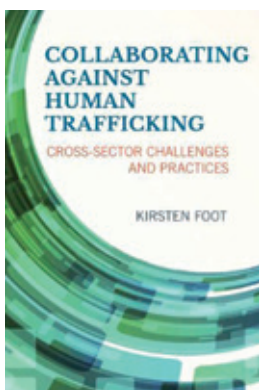


BRYSON, J. M., CROSBY, B. C. & BLOOMBERG, L. (Eds.) 2015. *Creating Public Value in Practice. Advancing the Common Good in a Multi-Sector, Shared-Power, No-One-Wholly-in-Charge World*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press. Available from: <https://www.crcpress.com/Creating-Public-Value-in-Practice-Advancing-the-Common-Good-in-a-Multi-Sector/Bryson-Crosby-Bloomberg/p/book/9781482214611>

"Creating Public Value in Practice: Advancing the Common Good in a Multi-Sector, Shared-Power, No-One-Wholly-in-Charge World brings together a stellar cast of thinkers to explore issues of public and cross-sector decision-making within a framework of democratic civic engagement. It offers an integrative approach to understanding and applying the concepts of creating public value, public values, and the public sphere. It presents a framework and language for opening a constructive conversation on what governments, businesses, nonprofits, and citizens can achieve in a democracy that honors a broad range of public values.

Public officials, scholars, and citizens alike are engaged in an intense debate about the proper purpose, role, and size of government. In the midst of this debate is a growing concern that important public values are ignored by government reform efforts. This book explores the different definitions of public value and approaches to public value creation, discernment, measurement, and assessment. The text helps clarify the issues and demonstrates how the meaning of public value is intimately related to how it is theorized, operationalized, and measured.

The book examines the many alternatives for recognizing, measuring, and assessing public value and addresses the pros and cons of each approach. The result is a contribution to the ongoing dialogue about the virtues and limitations of a focus on the public sphere, public values, and how to create public value in the context of developing and implementing policies, programs, projects, and plans that ideally boost confidence in public institutions."

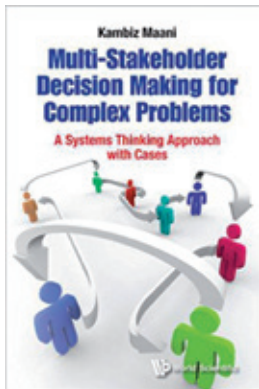


FOOT, K. 2016. *Collaborating against human trafficking cross-sector challenges and practices*. Rowman & Littlefield. Available from: <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781442246928/Collaborating-against-Human-Trafficking-Cross-Sector-Challenges-and-Practices>

"In the fight against human trafficking, cross-sector collaboration is vital – but often, systemic tensions undermine the effectiveness of these alliances. Kirsten Foot explores the most potent sources of such difficulties, offering insights and tools that leaders in every sector can use to re-think the power dynamics of partnering. Weaving together perspectives from many sectors including business, donor foundations, mobilization and advocacy NGOs, faith communities, and survivor-activists, as well as government agencies, law enforcement, and providers of victim services, Foot assesses how differences in social location (financial well-being, race, gender, etc.) and sector-based values contribute to inter-personal, inter-organizational, and cross-sector challenges. She convincingly demonstrates that finding constructive paths through such multi-level tensions – by employing a mix of shared leadership, strategic planning, and particular practices of communication and organization – can in turn facilitate

PARTNERSHIP PUBLICATIONS

more robust and sustainable collaborative efforts. An appendix provides exercises for use in building, evaluating, and trouble-shooting multi-sector collaborations, as well as links to online tools and recommendations for additional resources. All royalties from this book go to nonprofits in U.S. cities dedicated to facilitating cross-sector collaboration to end human trafficking. For more information and related resources, please visit <http://CollaboratingAgainstTrafficking.info>



MAANI, K. 2017. *Multi-Stakeholder Decision Making for Complex Problems: A Systems Thinking Approach with Cases, 1st Edition*. World Scientific. Available from: <http://www.worldscientific.com/worldscibooks/10.1142/9294>

“In the complex world of today, important policy and business decisions are still made with a 17th Century reductionist mindset and approach. Yet, complex challenges such as climate change, poverty, public health, security, energy futures, and sustainability transcend any single science, discipline or agency. Rather, they require integration of social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental concerns to achieve acceptable and sustainable outcomes. This entails synthesis of diverse knowledge and perspectives in a transparent and unifying decision-making process, engaging stakeholders with competing interests, perspectives, and agendas under uncertain and often adversarial conditions. Multi-Stakeholder Decision Making for Complex Problems — A Systems Thinking Approach with Cases brings together a unique self-contained volume to address this challenge. The book introduces the systems approach in non-technical language for multi-issue, multi-stakeholder decision making supplemented by numerous case studies including business, economics, healthcare, agriculture, energy, sustainability, policy, and planning. The book provides a fresh and timely approach with practical tools for dealing with complex challenges facing evolving global business and society today.”

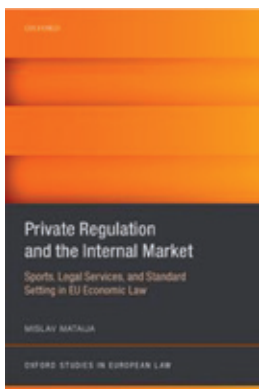


MADDEN, J. 2017. *Inter-Organizational Collaboration by Design*. Routledge. Available from: <https://www.routledge.com/Inter-Organizational-Collaboration-by-Design/Madden/p/book/9781138204812>

“Although difficult, complicated, and sometimes discouraging, collaboration is recognized as a viable approach for addressing uncertain, complex and wicked problems. Collaborations can attract resources, increase efficiency, and facilitate visions of mutual benefit that can ignite common desires of partners to work across and within sectors. An important question remains: How to enable successful collaboration?”

Inter-Organizational Collaboration by Design examines how these types of collaborations can overcome barriers to innovate and rejuvenate communities outlining the factors and antecedents that influence successful collaboration. The book proposes a theoretical perspective for collaborators to adopt design science (a solution finding approach utilizing end-user-centered research, prototyping, and collective creativity to strengthen individuals, teams, and organizations), the language of designers, and a design attitude as an empirically informed pathway for better managing the complexities inherent in collaboration.

Through an integrated framework, evidence-based tools and strategies for building successful collaboration is articulated where successful collaboration performance facilitates innovation and rejuvenation. This volume will be essential reading for academics, researchers, leaders and managers in nonprofit, private, and government sectors interested in building better collaborations.”



MATAIJA, M. 2016. *Private Regulation and the Internal Market: Sports, Legal Services, and Standard Setting in EU Economic Law*. Oxford University Press. Available from: <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/private-regulation-and-the-internal-market-9780198746652?cc=ca&lang=en&>

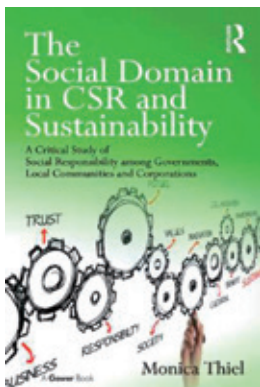
“How does EU internal market law, in particular the rules on free movement and competition, apply to private regulation? What issues arise if a bar association were to regulate advertising; when a voluntary product standard impedes trade; or when a sporting body restricts the cross-border transfer of a football player? Covering the EU’s free movement and competition rules from a general and sector-specific angle, focusing specifically on the legal profession, standard-setting, and sports, this book is the first systematic study of EU economic law in areas where private regulation is both important and legally controversial. Mislav Mataija discusses how the interpretation of both free movement and competition rule adapts to the rise of private regulation, and examines the diminishing relevance of the public/private distinction. As private regulators take on increasingly important tasks, the legal scrutiny over their measures becomes broader and moves towards what Mataija describes as ‘regulatory autonomy.’ This approach broadly disciplines, but also recog-

nizes the legitimacy of private regulators; granting them an explicit margin of discretion and focusing on governance and process considerations rather than on their impact on trade and competition. The book also demonstrates how the application of EU internal market law fits in the context of strategic attempts by the EU institutions to negotiate substantive reforms in areas where private regulation is pervasive. Surveying recent case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the practice of the European Commission, Mataija demonstrates how EU internal market law is used as a control mechanism over private regulators.”



PATTBERG, P. & ZELLI, F. 2016. *Environmental Politics and Governance in the Anthropocene. Institutions and legitimacy in a complex world.* Routledge. Available from: <https://www.routledge.com/Environmental-Politics-and-Governance-in-the-Anthropocene-Institutions/Pattberg-Zelli/p/book/9781138902398>

“The term Anthropocene denotes a new geological epoch characterized by the unprecedented impact of human activities on the Earth’s ecosystems. While the natural sciences have advanced their understanding of the drivers and processes of global change considerably over the last two decades, the social sciences lag behind in addressing the fundamental challenge of governance and politics in the Anthropocene. This book attempts to close this crucial research gap, in particular with regards to the following three overarching research themes: (i) the meaning, sense-making and contestations emerging around the concept of the Anthropocene related to the social sciences; (ii) the role and relevance of institutions, both formal and informal as well as international and transnational, for governing in the Anthropocene; and (iii) the role and relevance of accountability and other democratic principles for governing in the Anthropocene. Drawing together a range of key thinkers in the field, this volume provides one of the first authoritative assessments of global environmental politics and governance in the Anthropocene, reflecting on how the planetary scale crisis changes the ways in which humans respond to the challenge. This volume will be of great interest to students and scholars of global environmental politics and governance, and sustainable development.”



THIEL, M. 2016. *The social domain in CSR and sustainability: a critical study of social responsibility among governments, local communities and corporations.* Routledge. Available from: <https://www.routledge.com/The-Social-Domain-in-CSR-and-Sustainability-A-Critical-Study-of-Social/Thiel/p/book/9781472456373>

“This book provides a new and unique contribution to the body of knowledge in CSR and sustainability. With business, government and local community leaders faced with challenging societal constraints and consumer and public demands on a daily basis – these practical tools will put readers in a better position to manage and develop CSR and sustainability strategies.”



WARNER, J. 2016. *Multi-Stakeholder Platforms for Integrated Water Management, 1st Edition.* Routledge. Available from: <https://www.routledge.com/Multi-Stakeholder-Platforms-for-Integrated-Water-Management/Warner/p/book/9780754670650>

As they provide a negotiating space for a diversity of interests, Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) are an increasingly popular mode of involving civil society in resource management decisions. This book focuses on water management to take a positive, if critical, look at this phenomenon. Illustrated by a wide geographical range of case studies from both developed and developing worlds, it recognizes that MSPs will neither automatically break down divides nor bring actors to the table on an equal footing, and argues that MSPs may in some cases do more harm than good. The volume then examines how MSPs can make a difference and how they might successfully co-opt the public, private and civil-society sectors. The book highlights the particular difficulties of MSPs when dealing with integrated water management programmes, explaining how MSPs are most successful at a less complex and more local level. It finally questions whether MSPs are – or can be – sustainable, and puts forward suggestions for improving their durability.



Stella Pfisterer

Research Associate, Partnerships
Resource Centre, Rotterdam School
of Management, Erasmus University

Public Values and Our Collective Future: What Kind of World Do We Want to Live in and How Do We Create It?

John Bryson

McKnight Presidential Professor of Planning and Public Affairs, Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

As a thought leader on strategic planning and management of public and non-profit organizations, Professor John Bryson has inspired the field of cross-sector collaboration with his work for more than 35 years. John has published widely on topics around public and nonprofit strategic management, leadership, design of participation processes, cross-sector collaboration, and lately on the topic of public value. Two of his recent co-edited books include 'Public Value and Public Administration' (2015) and 'Creating Public Value in Practice: Advancing the Common Good in a Multi-Sector, Shared-Power, No-One-Wholly-in-Charge World' (2015). It is therefore a great opportunity to speak with him about his ideas on the role of cross-sector collaboration for public value creation in a changing world.

Stella Pfisterer (SP): Professor Bryson, thank you for taking the time to share some of your thoughts on cross-sector collaboration (CSC) with the ARSP. You co-edited two recent books and coauthored several articles on public value creation and collaboration in a changing world¹. Why is a focus on public values of such importance and relevance in this particular period?

John Bryson (JB): Donald Trump has been inaugurated as President of the United States. If anything makes you wonder about the future of the US, and indeed the world, certainly that event does it. Beyond the United States, the world is also changing. The European Union is experiencing a variety of strains,



BREXIT is happening, there are many conflicts in the Arab region, Russia and China are asserting themselves, and so on. A focus on public values draws attention to our collective future: What kind of world, societies and nations do we want? In a globalised world, in a world where liberal democracies are certainly experiencing enormous challenges; where collective institutions that are designed to guarantee our collective security, freedom, and well-being are experiencing terrific strains; where technology keeps changing things in often very unpredictable ways, it is important to think about values. Public values embody or underpin the purposes that we think should be served by democratic institutions, by authorized and legitimate organizations, by our nations, and by our alliances.

SP: What is the role of CSC for public value creation and what is necessary to create public value?

JB: For most of the big challenges that we face today you need cooperation involving different kinds of organizations. The idea of CSCs is that you find ways to pool the strengths of different kinds of organizations, while

minimizing or overcoming their weaknesses, in order to achieve things (or avoid things) that no one kind of organization could by itself. Businesses are good at narrowly defined kinds of wealth creation. Governments are, or can be, good at providing the underpinnings of that kind of wealth creation (e.g. the rule of law, much infrastructure, an educated workforce and citizenry); for producing public goods, like security, clean air, clean water, and a democratic ethos; ensuring justice; and helping create shared identity and solidarity. They can do what businesses cannot do, will not do, or do badly. Nonprofits do what governments might otherwise have to do, or cannot do at all. Cross-sector collaboration creates a greater collective capability to more completely address a problem whose solution does not lie within the competence of a single kind of organization. There is reasonably strong evidence that liberal democracies work best when power is shared across sectors and there is respect and appreciation for

CSCs are not an easy answer to hard problems; they are hard answers to hard problems.

what the different sectors do. I think that in the US, our greatest collective achievements have all depended on contributions from more than one sector – often directly, rather than coincidentally, through cross-sector collaboration. However, it is also obvious that CSCs are not an easy answer to hard problems; they are hard answers to hard problems. There are just more ways to fail at collaboration than there are ways to succeed. Just because it is necessary to collaborate does not mean that the collaboration will succeed.

In simplest terms four things are required for public value creation through CSCs: First, the CSC must demonstrate its legitimacy and authority through authorization by and collaboration between legitimate decision bodies in the different sectors. Often broad stakeholder and citizen support is needed as well. Second, capabilities, competencies, and working relationships are needed to create public value. Third, there needs to be a clear focus on public value creation, however defined. Fourth, practices that link legitimacy and authority, capabilities, and public values in

INTERVIEW

effective ways are needed. These include: supportive formal and informal processes of democracy; policy analysis, design and evaluation; leadership; dialogue and deliberation; careful design and implementation of the cross-sector collaborations; and good strategic management.

SP: Collaborating as a new way of governing societies for public value creation has implications for the role of governments and specifically for the role of public managers. What is required for governments and public managers to become effective in their new role?

JB: Partnering is not brand new for governments, certainly not in the US, but it is becoming increasingly emphasized. In the emerging approach to governance, government acts as convener, catalyst, and collaborator: sometimes steering, sometimes rowing, sometimes partnering, sometimes staying out of the way. In other words, government is a means, but not the only means, of creating public value. The objective is to create public value in such a way that what the public cares most about is addressed effectively and what is good for the public is put in place. The public manager requires skills in hosting and managing meetings involving people from multiple sectors. Adeptness at sharing power is needed, while also acting as a significant guarantor of important public values (e.g. transparency, the rule of law, equitable treatment, justice, etc.). In addition, there are demands for systems thinking and modelling skills. These are not the kind of skills that many public managers are historically trained in. Hierarchy and bureaucracy will not go away for public managers; bureaucratic management skills are still necessary. But partnering skills are increasingly emphasized. On the one hand, discretion is needed, but on the other hand that discretion is constrained by law, democratic and constitutional values, and a multi-faceted approach to accountability.

SP: In 2015, you and your coauthors Barbara Crosby and Melissa Stone published a 10-year update on your frequently cited 2006 Public Management Review article, “The design and implementation of cross-sector collaboration: propositions from literature”. How has the field of CSP research developed in the past decade? Moreover, what has not yet changed much?

JB: The good news is there are a lot of smart, well-trained

people from different fields looking at CSCs. In our recent review, we recognized some theoretical convergence around the main elements of CSCs; a real growth in the amount of empirical work on many aspect of CSCs; recognition of the need for leadership for CSCs to work well; and awareness of the dynamic nature of CSCs.

The bad news is that there is so much work left to do. I personally would like to see more carefully done longitudinal comparative case studies involving both qualitative and quantitative data analysis and modelling that can comprehend the complex dynamics of cross-sector collaboration over time. In addition, I think there are some topics which have not yet been paid enough attention. These include a need for more research on the effects of the institutional and technical environments on collaboration. Barbara, Melissa and I have researched CSCs in the transportation sector where we looked at a federal program that required metropolitan areas to introduce what’s called ‘dynamic

I learned that my research and the field could be advanced by focusing on deeply practice-oriented, value-laden challenges that are consequential for people’s lives.

pricing’ on highways in order to reduce traffic congestion. It was eye-opening to us how much technology actually impacted the collaboration in a variety of ways. Second, there is just not enough attention to outcomes in general and specifically to public value outcomes, such as equity, justice, procedural rationality, transparency and accountability. Third, there is not enough attention to the limits of CSCs as strategies to address different kinds of problems. Fourth, I think one of the biggest gaps right now is the lack of attention to politics – societal, organizational, partisan and otherwise. You can’t manage CSCs and their inherent tensions without understanding politics. Politics is about how we humans figure out what to do in situations of uncertainty and ambiguity where decisions have to be made and there is no obvious technical answer available. Bringing in power and politics is crucial because otherwise you are probably assuming that people must just

be acting as if power is not something real; that we humans are just sort of rational calculators and do not come with emotions, interests, and a willingness to engage in politics. I mean that doesn't describe the people I know. Linked to this, we do not know how people individually and in groups actually *think* when they engage in the strategizing and politics of collaboration. I mean not in terms of cognitive style inventories, but what is the actual thinking process and the content of their thinking when they engage in CSCs?

SP: In your recent work you highlight that “practice generally appears to be ahead of theory when it comes to public value creation”. What is necessary to better link research and practice?

JB: After graduation from college in the late 1960s, my first job involved trying to organize low-income black and white communities in the American South. There wasn't much academic help about how to do that. Instead, it was all learning from skilled practitioners and just plain learning by doing. At that time, I did not realize that my entire career would end up being organized around two big questions: How do people figure out what they think they ought to want, and how to get it? And how do you help people figure out what they think they want and how to get it? Even though I couldn't have articulated those questions then, they are what got me into researching strategic planning, leadership and collaboration. I learned that my research and the field could be advanced by focusing on deeply practice-oriented, value-laden challenges that are consequential for people's lives. Immersion in practice situations and practice-oriented thinking was a crucial research move. Now, there actually is a lot of research that can help with answering those two questions, but I still find I learn an enormous amount not from the literature, but from watching and engaging with very skilled practitioners.

So the good news here is that many people are looking into such practice-rich questions. The bad news is that there is a lot to do and that we need good practice-oriented theory and knowledge quickly, and I don't just mean academic knowledge published in journals. Practitioners need to have the skills and abilities to collaborate and respond effectively to pressing issues that won't wait, and relationships and institutions need to be in place so that we can address important challenges. Translating research

back to practice is hard for academics. Action research and developmental evaluations may be good ways to bridge academia and practice. In addition, since it is now much harder to keep up with the literature and with practice, it seems like the only way to do so is by working in teams.

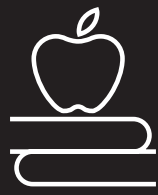
SP: Finally, do you have any message for the readership of the ARSP?

JB: My answer is prompted by the fact that the United States has a new President and a new administration intent on dramatically altering the status quo in ways that I think are typically not good. In many democratic nations around the world – and certainly in the US – this appears to be a time that will really test the institutions and norms of liberal democracy and commitments to important public values such as democracy, equity, justice, compassion, transparency, the rule of law, civility, fact-based dialogue and deliberation, and freedom of the press. Certainly in liberal democracies it is important for people to appreciate both the strengths and fragility of liberal democratic institutions. These precious advances by the human family should never be taken for granted. I believe our research should focus on ways of strengthening our institutions and practices, such as CSCs, in ways that can help advance the common good for all people.

SP: Thank you very much, John, for this frank and informative interview. Your call on our responsibility for public values in this changing world, your suggestions for future research and practice-academia collaboration will certainly inspire the ARSP community to continue joining hands for knowledge creation on CSCs.

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ANNUAL REVIEW OF
SOCIAL
PARTNERSHIPS

PEDAGOGY

SECTION CONTENTS

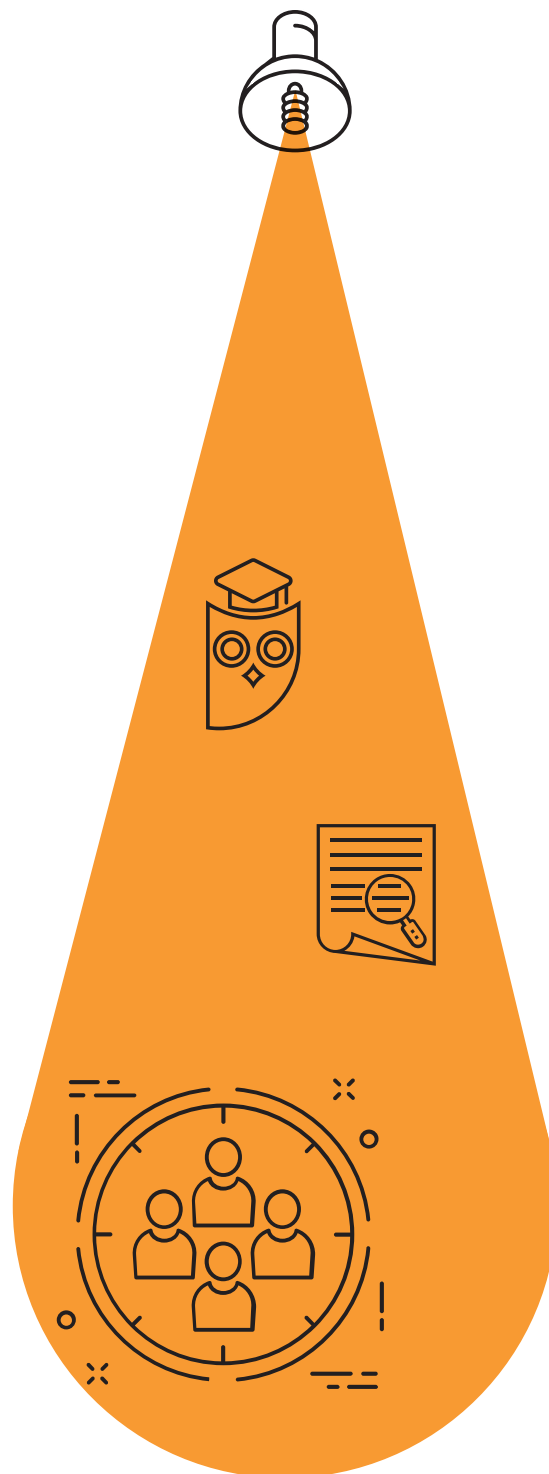
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by Lea Stadtler
*Associate Professor, Grenoble
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In the Spotlight: Cross-Sector Competencies and Case Study Resources

Welcome to the seventh ARSP Pedagogy Section, one of the rare spaces for sharing CSSP teaching, training, and learning resources. As the quantity of interesting resources and ideas has grown rapidly over the years, it was time for our team to grow as well. A warm welcome to our new contributors, Lili Mundle, Helena Knight, Sid Saleh and Eduardo Ordonez-Ponce, who all bring specific expertise to make the ARSP as diverse as CSSPs themselves.



Building on this increased support, this year's Pedagogy Section first addresses a topic that has always been present in the team's reflections and discussions, yet calls for more specific attention: what kinds of competencies are needed to collaborate successfully in CSSPs? One might think about the ability to solve complex problems collaboratively. The World Economic Forum 2016 "*The Future of Jobs*" report identified complex problem solving as the key skill demanded in more than one third of all jobs in 2020. But other skills are also required. Consequently, the first contribution, co-authored with Adriane MacDonald, presents a literature-based framework as a baseline to approach the discussion of CSSP competencies. The second contribution, by Adriane MacDonald and Eduardo Ordonez-Ponce, explores the implications for classroom and training settings, and presents insights from a tailored design thinking pedagogy workshop. Sid Saleh subsequently enriches the discussion by presenting a creative teaching innovation, aimed at developing participants' problem-solving and negotiation skills.

Case studies are one of the most promising tools for promoting CSSP competencies and previous ARSP contributions have provided pioneering ideas for integrating CSSP cases into courses and training programs (see Table 1).

The pool of case material and approaches is growing, thereby becoming more diverse and opening up new pathways. Thus, there is much greater scope for exploration and discussion. David Hyatt begins this year's case series by presenting the innovative SWIF method - student-written, instructor-facilitated case writing in CSSP coursework. Alternatively, teachers and trainers may use ready-made case studies. In addition to academic case studies (see *ARSP 9*, pp. 38-39 for respective platforms), Lili Mundle highlights in her contribution why and how practitioner cases also present a valuable teaching and learning resource. Looking at the case environment, Helena Knight complements and closes this year's case-study series by drawing our attention to the value of case competitions for the teaching and learning of CSSP-related insights.

The presentation of these inspiring contributions would not have been possible without our dedicated sponsor, the Geneva Public-Private Partnership Center. We would like to express our gratitude for this support and invite you to learn more about their systems approach towards CSSPs. Finally, enjoy reading this year's pedagogy collection and please let me know if you have ideas, tools, and resources for continuing the discussion in next year's issue ([lea.stadtler\(at\)grenoble-em.com](mailto:lea.stadtler(at)grenoble-em.com)).

ARSP Issue	Case-Related Contributions
<i>ARSP 8</i> , pp. 35-39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of how to teach the collaboration continuum with case studies • Presentation of a CSSI resource list of case providers
<i>ARSP 9</i> , pp. 39-42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on using cases for discussing the tragedy of the commons and for preparing a related simulation game
<i>ARSP 10</i> , pp. 45-60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases presented for how to teach systems thinking in CSSPs • Introduction of a starter toolbox, including cases to discuss the why, what, how and trends of CSSPs
<i>ARSP 11</i> , p. 50-53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases presented for discussing the role of CSSPs with respect to gender equality and marginalized people

Table 1: Overview of Previous Case-Related ARSP Contributions

SPONSORSHIP



by Gilbert Probst
Professor, Founder and Director



by Moira V. Faul
Head of Research



by Özgü Karakulak
Research and Teaching Assistant



A Systemic View of Cross-Sector Partnerships

The Geneva Public-Private Partnership Center is proud to sponsor the Pedagogy Section of the 2017 ARSP. This is an important platform for reflection and sharing ideas and resources for improving competencies for cross-sector collaboration.

At the Geneva Public-Private Partnership Center, we are committed to this innovative type of collaboration and, in the course of the last year, we have re-focused our approach towards this topic. Specifically, our new strategy puts systems approaches at the center of our research. We consider that social problems cannot be defined separately from the system from which they emerge. We treat partnerships as complex systems, which then feedback into the wider system and context into which they intervene. A systems approach investigates the changes that might emerge from complex interconnections over *time* in specific *contexts* that shape which *elements* (partners) may be included and excluded; how these elements relate to each other; and the partnership *system* that is produced.

Taking a systems approach in research opens a box of pedagogical questions about how to develop the next generation of scholars and practitioners to effectively use systems approaches. In our recent book¹, we recommend:

1. Defining the boundaries of the system and building causal diagrams.
2. Creating a shared understanding of the functioning of the system.
3. Identifying key feedback loops and entry points for action.

Systems approaches capture dynamic processes and relationships and non-linear causality. They help identify the positive and negative feedback loops that generate unintended consequences, and the emergent properties that arise from system interactions in order to tackle:

Systemic challenges: Rather than reaching for technical solutions, system dynamics focus on interactions between partners and emergent system properties.

Relational challenges: In addition to identifying individual partners, network techniques can be used to map and analyze relationship structure and quality².

Dynamic challenges: Outcomes and impacts are not always linear, additive and proportional to inputs and outputs. Dynamic analysis charts non-linear change, including feedback loops, tipping points and thresholds³.

Thus, our work uses and promotes systems approaches to decipher the complexity of partnership systems and foster self-sustaining change. Researching and teaching systems competencies is critical to supporting cross-sector partnerships to deliver on their ambitious promises.

Learn more about us at ppp.unige.ch and connect via Twitter [@PPPResearchCent](https://twitter.com/PPPResearchCent).

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It's More Than the Reading Assignment: Skillsets and Competencies for Effective Cross-Sector Collaboration

What is required for an individual to successfully engage in and manage cross-sector social partnerships (CSSPs)? This question is central to our discussions and reflections in the Pedagogy Section, yet is not easy to answer. In the *ARSP 10* (pp. 50-61), we introduced the CSSP Teaching Toolbox which provides material for discussing the why, what, and how of CSSPs. As such, it is largely focused on CSSP-related explicit knowledge – knowledge and insights about the key questions and challenges along a partnership's lifecycle. Such explicit knowledge is an important starting point. However, CSSP teaching and learning may also need to address the more tacit components, with a view to developing individuals' CSSP skills. So, what does this tacit side of CSSP learning involve and how can we promote it in classrooms and training settings? In order to develop a working framework to structure the multitude of relevant skills, we analyzed academic and practitioner resources on cross-sector collaboration and related pedagogical areas (see Table 1 for our resource list, available on [ResearchGate](#)). During this process, a question arose as to

whether analyzing CSSP skills is identical to analyzing the specificities of CSSP leadership. Yes and no. Rather than restricting our framework to a few individuals guiding the partnership from a more hierarchical perspective ("leaders"), it should be designed for all actors involved in cross-sector collaboration. And owing to their collaborative nature and the absence of blueprints, CSSPs commonly call for every member to assume a leadership role – whether in small or large-scale dimensions.

We structure our framework along four different, yet inter-related types of required skillsets – interpersonal, communication, entrepreneurial, and systems thinking. Further, we distinguish between the "what" and the "how" of required activities. Specifically, skills commonly define the "what" of specific learned activities, while competencies

relate to "how" the learned activities are performed¹. For each of the four skillsets, we developed a "Steering Wheel" that visualizes the skills at its core (the "what") and presents the competencies (the "how") around them, to form a coherent wheel to navigate the different dimensions of CSSPs.

Moving from the framework to the implications for classroom and training programs, we suggest suitable



CROSS-SECTOR SKILLSETS

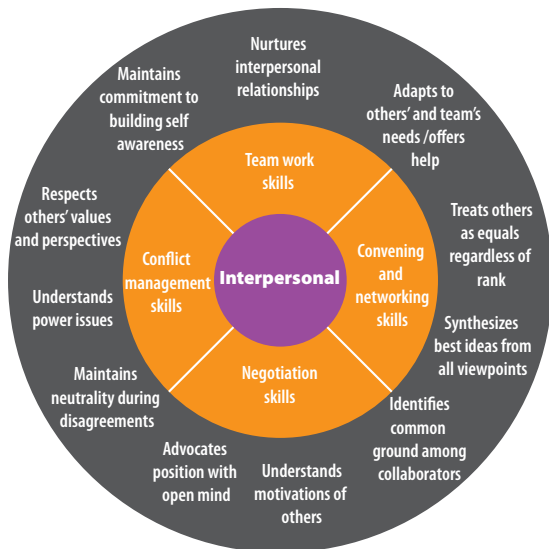
teaching approaches to help develop the skills and competencies. For each skillset, we suggest a three-step approach – practice, feedback and reflection – working in tandem to reinforce learning and development. As the feedback and reflection steps may be similar across the four skillsets, we introduce them only once (in the interpersonal skillset) and then focus on the different practice steps for the subsequent skillsets.

Interpersonal Skillset

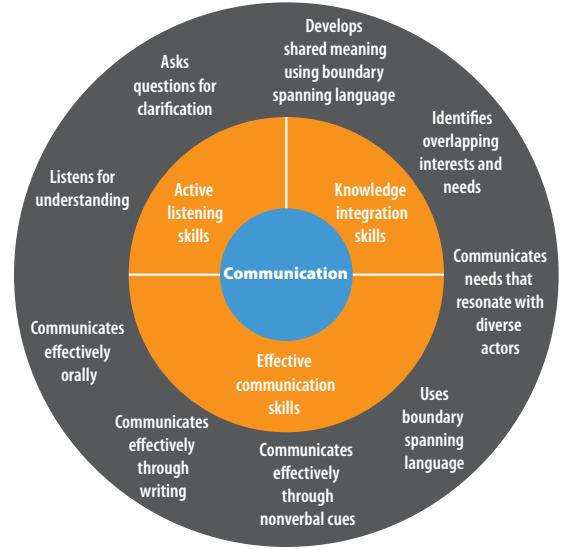
The interpersonal skillset centers on navigating the human relationship aspect of CSSPs. *Team work and conflict management skills* help individuals grasp the nuances of human relationships, which involve understanding

differences in values and perspectives, impacts of power asymmetries, and motivations of individuals. Building on team work and conflict management, people with this skillset also possess *convening and networking skills*. Those able to convene and network are skilled at finding common ground among diverse actors, by understanding their role and others’ roles within a landscape of relationships. Finally, *negotiation skills* help when managing diversity, by maintaining an open mind while resolving conflict and navigating difference. The four skills forming this skillset are essential to managing CSSPs because they enable partners to establish common ground on a shared problem through an ongoing process of relationship building that validates and values diverse stakehold-

Cross-sector Skillset What Skill How Competency



Cross-sector Skillset What Skill How Competency



STEERING WHEELS

CSSP teaching and learning may also need to address the more tacit components, with a view to developing individuals’ CSSP skills.

er perspectives. See Steering Wheel 1 for a summary of the skills and competencies linked to this skillset.

To encourage the practice of interpersonal skills in classroom and training settings, the instructor may foster teamwork exercises, assigning team roles and asking the participants to prepare team contracts and secure a commitment to the work². Another practice tool is role play, in which the participants have to understand others’ positions and come to a jointly agreed solution. An example of a CSSP role play (“Role Play of a First Partner Meeting”)

is presented in the **ARSP 10**, pp. 64-65. The practice part should be supported by asking participants to give and receive constructive peer feedback on their performance. Since reflection is important to developing an individual's skills, instructors may also assign a personal reflection activity that gives participants an opportunity to reflect on their activities, for example in the role play.

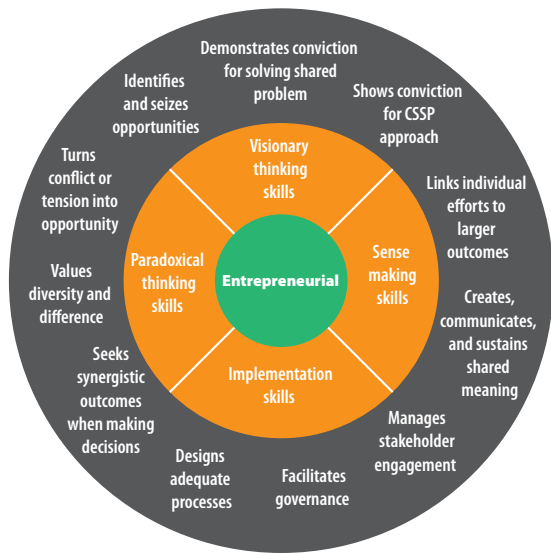
Communication Skillset

Skills and competencies in the communication skillset are critical for establishing shared meaning among diverse actors. *Active listening and effective communication skills* allow individuals to overcome the risk of superficial understanding and, as a result, suggest more appropri-

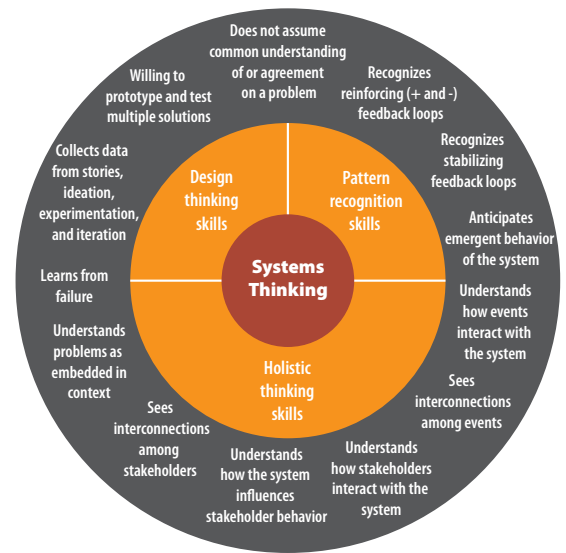
language that transcends sector boundaries. Taken together active listening, effective communication, and knowledge integration skills build the communication

Skills commonly define the “what” of specific learned activities, while competencies relate to “how” the learned activities are performed.

Cross-sector Skillset What Skill How Competency



Cross-sector Skillset What Skill How Competency



ate solutions. For example, individuals with these skills develop deep understanding of problems by examining them from diverse perspectives. They do this by listening for comprehension, requesting repetition of opaque statements, asking clarifying questions, and summarizing positions and arguments to confirm comprehension. Active listening and effective communication skills form the foundation for knowledge integration. *Knowledge integration skills* enable individuals to facilitate shared meaning across sectors by identifying overlapping needs among diverse partners and framing needs with

skillset (see Steering Wheel 2) which is important for information flow and understanding in CSSPs.

There are many ways to practice communication skills in classroom and training settings. However, these should focus on two-way communication (e.g. interactions, Q&As or negotiations) rather than one-way communication (e.g. presentations). For inspiration on communication-oriented exercises, see the teaching innovation in this issue, on pp. 54-56, or the exercise “CSSPs as a Panacea?” in the **ARSP 10**, pp. 62.

Entrepreneurial Skillset

The entrepreneurial skillset captures the skills associated with inspiring and organizing collective action. People who demonstrate *visionary thinking skills* inspire, give direction, and connect with others through vision and conviction. They leverage their *sense-making skills* to succeed in the co-creation of a shared vision, by building a narrative that aligns micro actions to macro outcomes and sustaining shared meaning over the long term. Also, important to this skillset are *paradoxical thinking skills*. Paradoxical thinking skills help turn set-backs into opportunities and, where possible, make synergistic decisions that respond to the needs of all parties. *Implementation skills* are the skills required to organize collective action. These skills focus on developing inter-organizational structures to manage the complexities of engaging diverse stakeholders, including activities such as facilitating governance and designing implementation processes. Steering Wheel 3 provides additional detail for the entrepreneurial skillset and competencies.

The development of entrepreneurial CSSP skills in a classroom or training setting may require innovative project work, in which participants develop partnership plans for prevalent social or environmental challenges. “Consulting an NGO on CSSP Opportunities” (see **ARSP 10**, p. 63) is one example of a project exercise to promote participants’ entrepreneurial skills. It asks participants to step into the shoes of consultants and prepare a business partnership proposal within two weeks for a chosen NGO.

Systems Thinking Skillset

The skills and competencies related to systems thinking are important to understanding the factors that contribute to a problem and identifying and testing potential solutions. Individuals with such skills are able to recognize system patterns, by noticing feedback loops that exasperate a problem, contribute to success, or maintain the status quo³. *Holistic thinking skills*, interconnected with *pattern recognition skills*, are demonstrated when actors view a problem as embedded in a system. Those able to take an embedded perspective have high context awareness: they view stakeholders and events as interconnected, both influencing and being influenced by the system. Finally, *design thinking skills* facilitate appropriate data collection and solution testing approaches for complex problem solving⁴. Related competencies thus

Developing such skills with a specific emphasis on CSSP tacit knowledge requires innovative pedagogical approaches that complement the more traditional approaches, focused on explicit knowledge.

include design principles, such as data driven ideation, experimentation, and iteration when defining and addressing a problem. Design thinking along with pattern recognition and holistic thinking skills, form the systems thinking skillset (see Steering Wheel 4). This skillset is most valuable when a CSSP is tasked with addressing a complex problem.

From a pedagogical perspective, systems thinking skills can be promoted, for instance, by using related simulations, case studies, or partnership scenario-planning. An example of a simulation on systems thinking is presented in the **ARSP 10** “Creating a Lecture on Systems Thinking in CSSPs”, pp. 45-50.

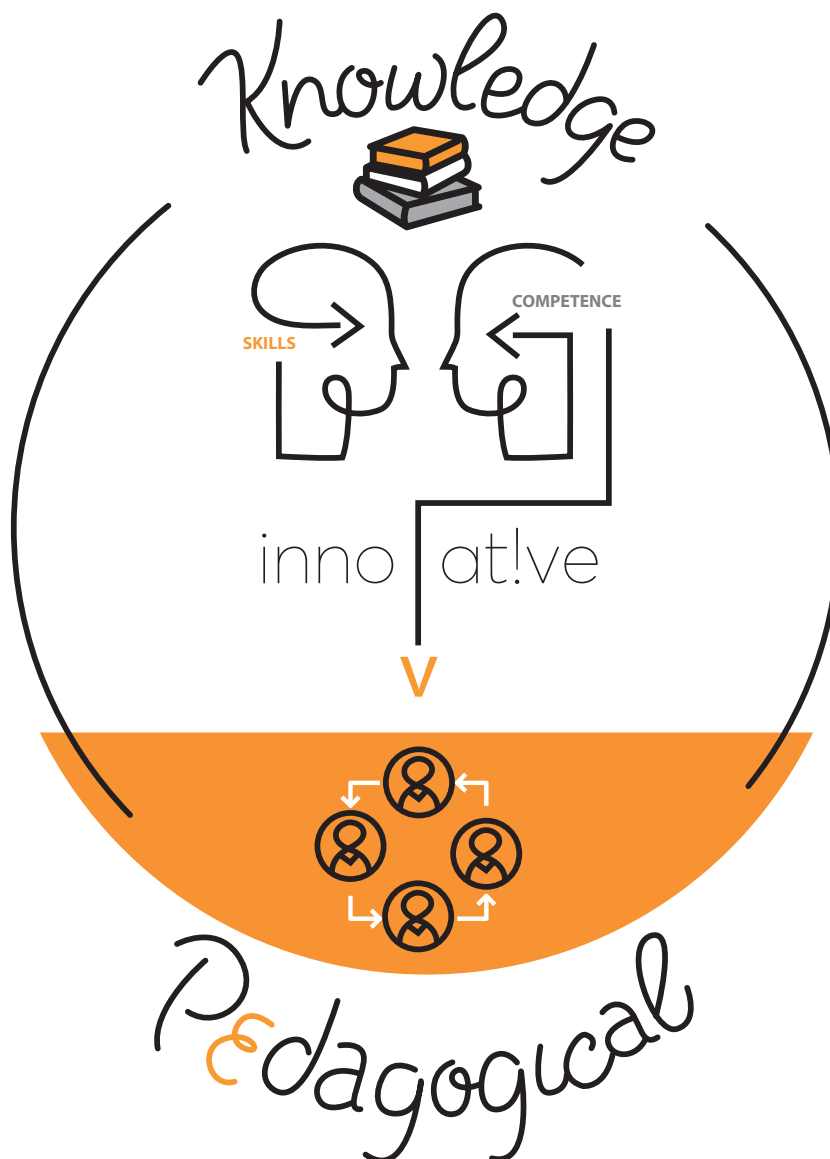
From Pilot to Product: Designing Our Way to Better Teaching Innovations

In this article, we have presented a framework of four skillsets: communication, interpersonal, entrepreneurial and systems thinking. This framework, while not providing a comprehensive formula for partnership success, may enable more reflective, collaborative, and effective interactions. As our literature review indicates, developing such skills with a specific emphasis on CSSP tacit knowledge requires innovative pedagogical approaches that complement the more traditional approaches, focused on explicit knowledge. Moreover, developing the diverse CSSP skillsets in classrooms and training will require shifts in the instructors’ skillsets. We therefore concur with Sandra Waddock, who outlined that educating future CSSP leaders requires instructors and trainers to be co-learners with participants; be problem definers first and solvers second; be learning facilitators; be inquisitive; and be practice oriented (see **ARSP 7**, pp. 21-25 for the interview).

Teaching for CSSP skill development requires sophisticated efforts and more interactive teaching tools. This conclusion, in turn, gave us the idea to engage in a pedagogical development experiment that we present in the following article, *Let's Collaborate! Using Design Thinking to Develop Cross-Sector Teaching Innovations*. As we continue on our path of developing our framework and filling it with pedagogical tools, we would like to enlist the help of the ARSP community. We hope the topic has sparked your interest and look forward to receiving your comments and ideas for, or experience with, related exercises. Please contact [adriane.macdonald \(at\) uleth.ca](mailto:adriane.macdonald@uleth.ca)

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August 6, 2016
**77th Annual Meeting of the
 Academy of Management**
 Anaheim, California

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Let's Collaborate! Using Design Thinking to Develop Cross-Sector Teaching Innovations

This article provides an overview of the workshop *Design Challenge: Developing Students' Cross-Sector Competencies*, facilitated by the ARSP pedagogy team at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management in August 2016.



Pictures 1-2: Participants of Groups 1 and 2

What?

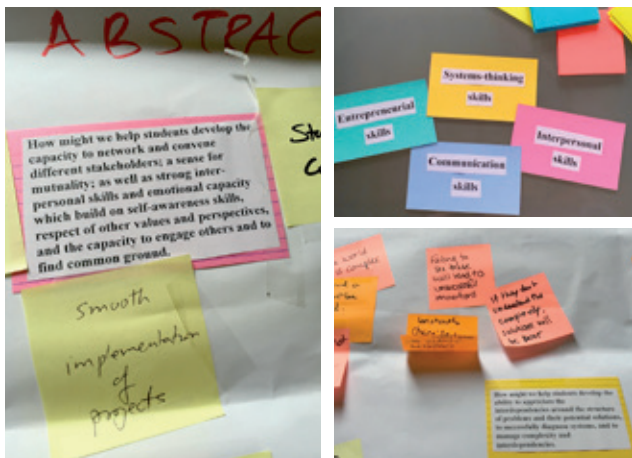
The ARSP pedagogy team developed and facilitated a Public and Nonprofit – Social Issues in Management (PNP-SIM) sponsored professional development workshop at the 77th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management.

During the workshop a diverse group of management educators from different countries and backgrounds (Pictures 1-2) were tasked with designing teaching innovations aimed at helping develop student four cross-sector skillsets: communication, interpersonal, entrepreneurial, and systems thinking skillsets. The skillsets resulted from a comprehensive CSSP literature review as discussed on pp. 45-47.

During the workshop a diverse group of management educators from different countries and backgrounds (Pictures 1-2) were tasked with designing teaching innovations

Why?

The purpose of this workshop was to (1) pilot the ARSP pedagogy team's idea to use design thinking for teaching innovation development, (2) to create space for management educators to explore CSSI skillsets, and (3) to develop activities/lessons that overcome the limitations faced



Pictures 3-5: First phase of the process - Opening

in traditional teaching and learning settings¹. Besides discussing the required skillsets and competencies, participants developed teaching innovations in small working groups through a guided design-thinking approach. Design thinking as a workshop method is promising since it encourages participants to think broadly about problems, develop a deep understanding of end-users, and appreciate the value in the contributions of others². The outcomes of the workshop were integrated into ARSP's teaching innovation template and shared with the participants after the workshop.

How?

The design thinking activities of this workshop covered three phases and five exercises.

The first phase, called *opening*, was about exploring and defining the problem to be solved or opportunity to be seized. For this phase, we used a game storming activity called, idea abstraction, as seen from Picture 3. The activity centered on predetermined opportunity statements for each of the four CSSI skillsets (Picture 4). Participants decided in advance which CSSI opportunity statement they were most interested in working on. In this activity, participants were asked to brainstorm on *why* seizing the opportunity presented to them would be beneficial, as well as *how* they might go about seizing it with a teaching innovation (Picture 5).

The second phase, called *exploring* focused on developing a democratically selected idea from the previous activity. This phase was about experimenting and working through the messiness of the ideas. Participants were introduced to two tasks to help them to explore their idea, (1) Flip it!³ (Picture 6) and (2) Comic strip prototyping (Picture 7). In the Flip it! task, participants first discussed



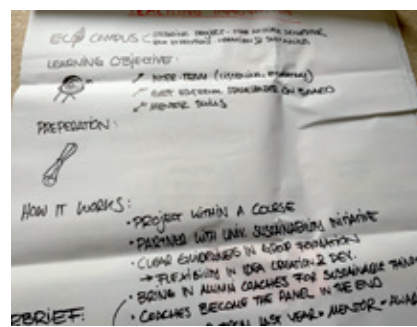
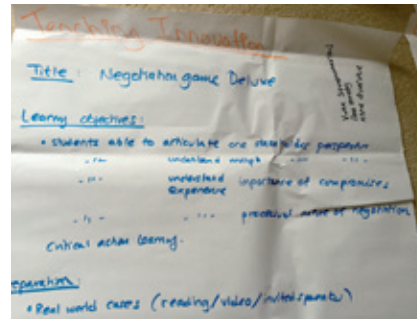
Pictures 6-7: Second phase of the process - Exploring

SKILLSET WORKSHOP

the constraints of their idea and then explored opportunities for overcoming those challenges, thus improving on their original idea. For the second exploring task, participants drew a comic strip to pictorially communicate their idea.

The third phase, called *closing*, was aimed at making decisions and refining the ideas: Participants tested their ideas, got feedback, and filled in a teaching innovation template (Pictures 8 and 9). Specifically, each group used their comic strip to pitch their idea to another group, they collected feedback grids from each member of the group they pitched to (as seen from Picture 10), and incorporated the feedback into their final product, a teaching innovation. Figure 1 shows the process and every workshop stage, including some key questions and output expectations.

Design thinking as a workshop method is promising since it encourages participants to think broadly about problems, develop a deep understanding of end-users, and appreciate the value in the contributions of others



Like	Improve
Questions	New Ideas

Pictures 8-10: Third phase of the process – Closing

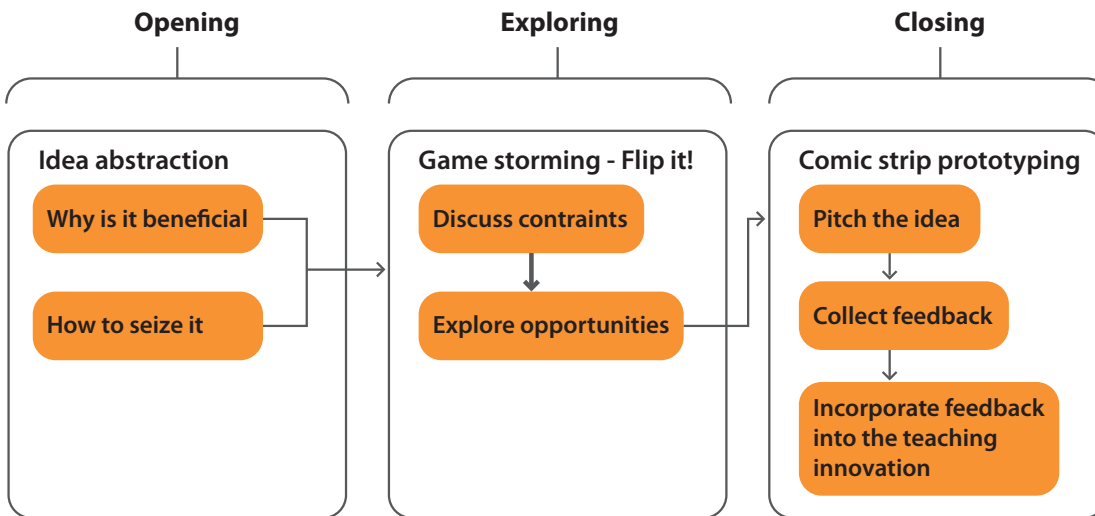


Figure 1: Collaborative Process

Workshop Tips and Tricks

In the spirit of design thinking, this workshop was a pilot, intended to be improved and repeated. We share our lessons learned so you can test it yourself.

1. Make sure to have enough time – this workshop requires two and a half to three hours;
2. Keep it simple! Simplify opportunity statements as much as possible;
3. Include constraints to impose structure for more effective brainstorming;
4. Tell participants to be flexible with their idea, if something isn't working, make changes to the idea and let it evolve;
5. Skilled facilitators help to assist participants in the process: Each facilitator was supplied with an instructional booklet several weeks in advance of the workshop.
6. Centralized time keeping and instruction delivery help to keep all groups on task;
 - a. We used a PowerPoint presentation to provide centralized verbal, written, and visual instructions for each workshop step.
 - b. Timers were embedded on each PowerPoint slide to reinforce time constraints.
7. Provide adequate and enough material for the activity. We used flip-chart paper, colored markers, black sharpies, post-it notes, and cue cards.

Outcomes and Next Steps

1. Participants received summaries of the teaching innovations developed in the session.
2. The ARSP's pedagogy team learned from this pilot workshop and has incorporated changes to improve the session for the next time it is run (e.g. at one of the upcoming conferences).

Special thanks to Ingo Rauth and Lisa Carlgren for your valuable facilitation tips and ideas and for your expert facilitation during the workshop.

Thanks to our design facilitator Vivek Soundararajan who was a wonderful support during the workshop.

Thank you to Lea Stadler for playing a key role in developing the workshop.

If you are interested in learning more about the process for developing teaching innovations, please contact [adriane.macdonald \(at\) uleth.ca](mailto:adriane.macdonald@uleth.ca)

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design



contribution





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Achieving Alignment in Cross-Sector Collaborations

Assessing Collaborative Creativity Constraints in Cross-Sector Interactions

OBJECTIVE

Cross-sector collaborations draw on contributors from diverse backgrounds and skill-sets. This diversity introduces much needed richness and unwanted risks to cross-sector interactions. Invariably, collaborators face constraints as they work together. They assess the opportunities and threats presented by these obstacles through different lenses, which may sometimes lead to conflict. This exercise is designed to help collaborators explore and align their views regarding potential constraints as early as possible in their cross-sector interactions to minimize conflicts and achieve desirable outcomes. In a classroom, students can use this exercise to develop critical collaboration skills such as integrative negotiation, seeing multiple perspectives simultaneously and adapting to expected and unexpected roadblocks (see also pp. 45-47). This exercise is ideal for groups working in Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability, Strategy, Negotiation, Cross-Cultural Management, etc. For classroom or workshop applications, facilitators can select a brief partnership case study (see page 62-63).

MATERIALS & TIMING

This exercise leverages the Collaborative Creativity Constraints Assessment (in Figure 1 at the end of the article and on [ResearchGate](#)). Print the one-page Assessment for each participant. Allow 20-25 minutes for the exercise with students and 30 minutes with practitioners allocated as follows: 2-3 minutes to explain how it works, 5 minutes for individual work, 10 minutes for group work and 5 minutes for discussion.

HOW IT WORKS

To operationalize my doctoral research findings, I created the Constraints Assessment to guide a group of U.S. practitioners in moving their innovation projects forward. Subsequently, while at Wageningen University, I used this Assessment with groups of graduate students tasked with developing startup plans around using insects as a sustainable, alternative source of nutritional foods – a context in which constraints abound.

In classrooms, divide participants into teams of three to four. In practitioner workshops, teams are typically formed around projects.

Distribute the one-page Assessment to participants. Explain that the purpose of this exercise is to help collaboration members anticipate constraints that may interfere in some way with their interactions and affect their progress. Further explain that constraints are defined broadly

This exercise is designed to help collaborators explore and align their views regarding potential constraints as early as possible in their cross-sector interactions to minimize conflicts and achieve desirable outcomes.

as factors that must be taken into account. These include positive, negative and neutral concepts such as laws, rules, resources, guidelines, policies, norms, preferences, biases, best practices, stakeholder requirements and others. Instruct participants to work alone. Ask each participant to focus on the next project or team effort (for classroom application: the instructor identifies a partnership project and asks participants to focus on that project). Ask them to review the list of suggested constraints on the worksheet and to decide 1) if a specific constraint applies to their situation and is therefore a factor that must be taken into account. If a constraint is a factor, 2) prioritize it in terms of its relative importance from each participant's unique perspective. The highest priority is ranked number one, the next highest priority number two and so on. Encourage participants to add any missing constraints they anticipate in the space provided on the Assessment form. For complex projects, ask participants to focus on the most immediate stage or milestone of their project. Allow 5 to 10 minutes for this part of the exercise.

Now, ask members of the same project or team to compare their lists noting their agreement or disagreement on the relative prioritization of constraints. Where there is agreement, that's a good indication of alignment. Where there is disagreement, invite participants to discuss their different perspectives with an eye towards reconciling their differing prioritizations. Their goal is to arrive at a team-level prioritization that all team members can support.

DEBRIEF

Ask each team to share their experience with the rest of the participants. Use the following questions to get the discussion started:

1. Share one example where all team members agreed on a constraint's prioritization.
2. Share one example where team members did not agree on a constraint's prioritization.
3. Following up on the last example, ask participants to share their different perspectives leading to the disagreement.
4. Now, ask them how they reconciled their disagreement. How did they go about negotiating differences?

Once you have concluded the above discussion, ask all participants to reflect on it by asking them the following questions:

1. What surprised you? Why?
2. What did not surprise you? Why?
3. If a disagreement on constraints is not negotiated and reconciled, what might we expect as the team proceeds?

This exercise demonstrates that while constraints can be problematic for cross-sector collaborations, they are often manageable. The key is that team members learn a process for achieving alignment in the face of any constraints that arise.

In cross-sector collaborations, we tend to spend much time achieving alignment around high level goals and objectives but not on constraints.

In a recent workshop with graduate students, four members of a team identified "project deadline" as a constraint they prioritized differently. After much discussion, the team members realized that each member agreed that meeting the deadline was within their capabilities. However, they had diametrically opposed approaches to meeting the deadline. Two members prioritized the deadline lower. These two viewed the required tasks as trivial and easy to complete quickly even if they were to procrastinate till the 11th hour. They saw no need to explicitly schedule and assign any intermediate tasks. While the other two members agreed the tasks were easy, they worried that they may forget them and miss the deadline. Accordingly, the latter two members prioritized the deadline higher. These two insisted on formally scheduling intermediate tasks to ensure the deliverable was completed on time.

Lacking alignment on the approach to the deadline constraint, team members may have misunderstood each other leading to damaging misunderstandings. As the collaboration proceeded, the "more formal" team members would have expected incremental progress. Had the

TEACHING INNOVATION

“less formal” team members not met that expectation, they may have been judged as lazy or incapable.

In cross-sector collaborations, we tend to spend much time achieving alignment around high level goals and objectives but not on constraints. This exercise helps close that gap. It’s important to note that not all constraints can be teased out through this exercise. However, cross-sector collaborations stand better chances of success when team members take the time to explore their alignment around as many constraints as they can anticipate. In a classroom or workshop, experiencing the benefits of recognizing potential collaboration problems and

negotiating the best course of action is a memorable and useful lesson.

POSSIBLE EXTENSION

You may first use the Locked Faces exercise (see **ARSP 11**, pp. 54-55) which conveys that constraints are not necessarily negative and do indeed enhance creativity. Subsequently, you may introduce the Assessment exercise which focuses on the collaborative consideration and management of constraints for achieving team alignment. The editorial team and I invite you to share your experience using this exercise in class or practice (Sid. Saleh(at)Colorado.EDU).

Collaborative Creativity Constraints Assessment				
You have a creative idea or a solution that you want to drive forward with the help of a team. Use this assessment to identify potential constraints that may affect the acceptance and execution of the idea or solution.		Step 1: Decide if each constraint is a factor (Y) or not (N)	Step 2: Prioritize factor constraints (Y) if you were to drive the idea alone	Step 3: Prioritize factor constraints (Y) if you were to drive the idea with your team
	Constraint	Is it a factor? Y/N	My Constraints	My Team's Constraints
Explicit Constraints	Time-related (deadline, critical path, etc.)			
	Budget-related			
	People (specific skills, expertise, etc.)			
	Material (supplies, components, etc.)			
	Environmental (distance, noise, etc.)			
	Reward rules			
	Organizational policy/structure			
	Legal (agreement, SEC rule, etc.)			
	Prior Commitments (to customers, etc.)			
	Language			
	Physiological (too high, too heavy, etc.)			
	Market-related (competition, etc.)			
Implicit Constraints	Preferences			
	Biases			
	Values			
	Education			
	Experience			
	Expertise			
	Expectations			

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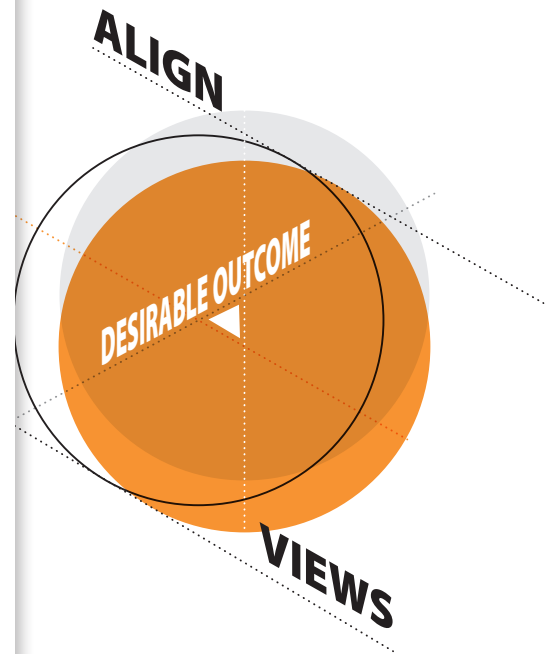


Figure 1: Collaborative Creativity Constraints Assessment Grid

“Once Upon a Time ...” Student-Written, Instructor-Facilitated Case Writing in CSSP Coursework



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Who doesn't like a good story? Good stories are part and parcel of good cases that, in classroom settings, can bring academic theories to life through their application to real-life settings. The case method originated at Harvard Law School around 1870 but has developed as a popular teaching pedagogy in various disciplines, including medicine, business, education, and social work, as a way to promote an active learning experience and improve student learning outcomes. In particular, case methodologies increasingly function to teach CSSP-related topics. For instance, in *ARSP 8* (pp. 35-39), we discussed teaching a partnership concept (the collaboration continuum) through a set of cases.

More recently, this method has expanded to include the possibility of students actually *writing* case studies, with faculty supervision. Student-Written, Instructor-Facilitated (SWIF) case writing thus transforms students, from consumers of cases to producers of case knowledge¹. In this brief article, I introduce the case method and the SWIF

pedagogy, including its potential for improving student learning. I also provide some references for those who may want to explore this interesting method in their own instructional settings.

The Case Method

To begin, let's clarify how a *teaching case* differs from other types of cases. A teaching case is meant to be used in an instructional setting and typically presents students with real-life scenarios and problems that they realistically might face later, in their professional careers. Students must apply what they have learned in their coursework to analyze the problem and recommend solutions. A teaching case study often takes one of two forms: evaluative or decision focused². An *evaluative* case describes a situation and the action taken; the instructor then asks students to apply readings and theories to evaluate this decision in the described case context. A *decision-focused* case instead asks the students to step into the shoes of a central protagonist with a problem to solve³. Rather than reporting a decision, it asks them to come up with the best choice, given the information provided. Decision-focused

SWIF CASE WRITING

cases tend to be more challenging for students, because they must sift through substantial information in the case to determine what and who are relevant to the decision, develop possible solutions with their own pros and cons, and then recommend the course of action, often including an implementation plan.

Decision-focused cases often follow a predictable format, with four primary sections: (1) an introduction and hook that creates tension and generates interest; (2) a background section that provides a broad context (e.g., in a business case, a description of the industry, followed by the company history and description of the protagonist); (3) a core analysis section that contains information on alternatives or other information relevant to the protagonist's decision; and (4) appendices that contain graphs, tables, notes, or other germane information but that otherwise might disturb the flow of the main document¹.

In the classroom, the instructor usually leads students through the case in a structured or semi-structured way, attempting to reinforce the lesson objectives. But the case method itself has learning objectives too; at a minimum, they include gaining knowledge, differentiating the trivial from the significant, and generalizing skills and abilities learned during the course of the case². Student-Written, Instructor-Facilitated (SWIF) case writing, for both evaluative and decision-focused cases, accordingly allows instructors to address additional learning objectives¹.

Student-Written, Instructor-Facilitated Case Writing

The SWIF case writing process builds substantially on the active learning embraced by the case method, in that it transforms the student into a researcher and shifts the function of the faculty from teacher to mentor or coach. The project usually is structured as a semester-long, team-based effort, with specific milestones to keep students on track. Cases can be fictional, derived from publicly available accounts, or based on interviews. Interview-based cases generally allow for greater understanding, interaction with practitioners, and more interesting cases; they also tend to require more paperwork, because teams may be required to follow their school's requirements related to student research involving human subjects. By writing the case, students gain skills development, content application practice, and personal growth.^[4] For example,

they can enhance their writing abilities, improve their critical thinking skills through the opportunity for original thought, develop cooperative learning skills through teamwork, and build greater tolerance for ambiguity and incompleteness¹.

In addition, they create teaching notes for the SWIF cases to provide guidance for "working the case." A teaching note develops the case issues in greater depth and (ideally) links those issues to theoretical or other course material, suggests teaching aids (e.g., videos and readings), provides a deep analysis of a set of questions that students working the case must answer, develops additional questions or issues to raise in class, and proposes potential broad agendas to help any adopters teach the case. Arguably, because of the deep analysis involved, the teaching note is the most important component of the project and a primary assessment tool⁵.

By now it may be clear that SWIF cases are not for every course. Several criteria underlie their appropriateness. First, the method should support the course's learning objectives. It spans the full gamut of *Bloom's Taxonomy*, so course objectives should emphasize the "create, evaluate, and analyze" dimensions and require teamwork to produce new and original work. Normally, such objectives arise in upper-level or advanced classes. Second, the class should be relatively small, considering the importance of the faculty-to-student ratio, especially as the faculty member takes on a new role, mindset, and efforts. Rather than assign a project and wait for the end-of-semester presentation, the faculty member must commit to a heavy engagement as a mentor and coach from the very start of the project. This substantial involvement in all phases, from guiding students' selection of case topics and settings to helping them formulate interview questions to reviewing drafts and providing feedback, means that any single faculty member can mentor only a limited number of teams. These faculty also should have some experience or expertise in writing cases but still be able to see the process from students' perspective.

Even with experience though, faculty may need some guidance in this new method. Fortunately there are many excellent resources and guides to writing cases (e.g.^{2,3}). The following list (see Table 1) contains selected resources specific to SWIF cases, reflecting several perspectives.

Resource Reference	Type	Value and Contribution
Swiercz, P.M. 2015. SWIF learning: A guide to student-written, instructor-facilitated case writing. Available on request from the author at profl@gwu.edu.	Unpublished manuscript	16-page guide intended to be distributed to students, containing advice for finding a research site and writing the case. Includes a self-evaluation checklist. Separately, a 3-page supplement provides guidance for instructors.
Vega, G. 2010. The undergraduate case research study model. <i>Journal of Management Education</i> , 34(4), 574-604. Available on <i>Research Gate</i> .	Journal article	Introduces the concept of SWIF with an emphasis on research. Provides descriptions of the assignment and elements of the study, example timelines, and a grading rubric.
Vega, G. 2013. Undergraduate case writing: The case research study model. In <i>The case writing workbook: A self-guided workshop</i> . Routledge: New York, pp. 134-184.	Book chapter	Module 6 (devoted to SWIF pedagogy) complements Vega's 2010 article, offering a substantial student handout with extensive information, such as how to conduct an interview, including getting permission.
Beal, B.D., MacMillan, K., Woodwark, M., and Schnarr, K. 2016. <i>The case project guide: How to write a great business case as a class project</i> . London, Ontario: Ivey Publishing.	Student workbook (students may purchase through Ivey)	This workbook, aimed at business students, is a comprehensive guide for how to form teams and create a team contract, get permissions and conduct interviews, and write a teaching note. Includes information on publishing and working with faculty.
Herreid, C.F. 1997/1998. What makes a good case? Some basic rules of good storytelling help teachers generate student excitement in the classroom. <i>Journal of College Science Teaching</i> , 27(3), 163-165. Available from <i>NSTA</i> .	Journal article	Short article that describes the elements of a "good" case, emphasizing the value of story, tension, empathy with central character(s), and quotations, along with a short comparative example. Can be combined with a short in-class exercise to develop a story from a situation.
Ross, D.N., Zufan, P., and Rosenbloom, A. 2008. Experiences from cross-institutional exchanges of undergraduate business student written cases. <i>Journal of Management Education</i> , 32(4), 444-475.	Journal article	Describes a cross-institutional experience involving three universities. Useful to potential adopters of this method, because it provides some data on students' perceptions of the utility of the exercise in learning course material.
Kearins, K. and Collins, E. 2009. Grounding sustainability in reality: Encouraging students to make their own case for action. In C. Wankel and J.A.F. Stoner (Eds.). <i>Management education for global sustainability</i> . Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, pp. 327-341.	Book chapter	Details the authors' experiences with SWIF cases in a sustainability context. Provides guidelines for using case assignments and evaluation, as well as examples of how students use and develop theory in the case assignments.

Table 1. Selected resources specific to SWIF cases

This Author's Experience with SWIF Cases in a CSSP Instructional Setting

I have used the SWIF case method in three different classes, including one dedicated to cross-sector partnerships for sustainability. In addition to gaining the skills mentioned previously, students benefit from (1) gaining a better understanding of the complexities involved in CSSP settings; (2) developing a sense of empathy with different partners and their positions; (3) engaging in deep thinking about theory-praxis links through their relationships with practitioners while also developing thesis thinking

(see *ARSP 10*); and (4) finding inspiration for thesis projects, internships, or careers. Faculty realize some of the same benefits but also can expect to develop deeper and more meaningful relationships with their students. Even practitioners benefit, through their interactions with students who provide fresh perspectives on organizational and partnership stories, especially if the students explain their theoretical analysis effectively.

SWIF CASE WRITING

My courses usually include a mix of graduate and undergraduate students. For graduate students, I require a full case (about 6000 words plus exhibits) and a full teaching note. For undergraduate students, I request a “mini-case” of about 1500–2000 words and a teaching note. In terms of data sources, students have the flexibility to gather information for the case from either interviews or secondary accounts. In my experience, the quality of the case ultimately relates more to students’ effort and attention than to the data source. However, I advise students that if their eventual hope is to publish their case, they should seek interviews. I also share the possibility that excellent cases produced in prior classes may be slated for use in future classes. Generally, because few students have ever attempted this kind of project before, there are new skills to develop and old skills to hone. Table 2 lists some of the challenges that students must overcome to achieve these skills, as well as some suggestions for faculty to assist this effort, using an SWIF approach in CSSP-related teaching.

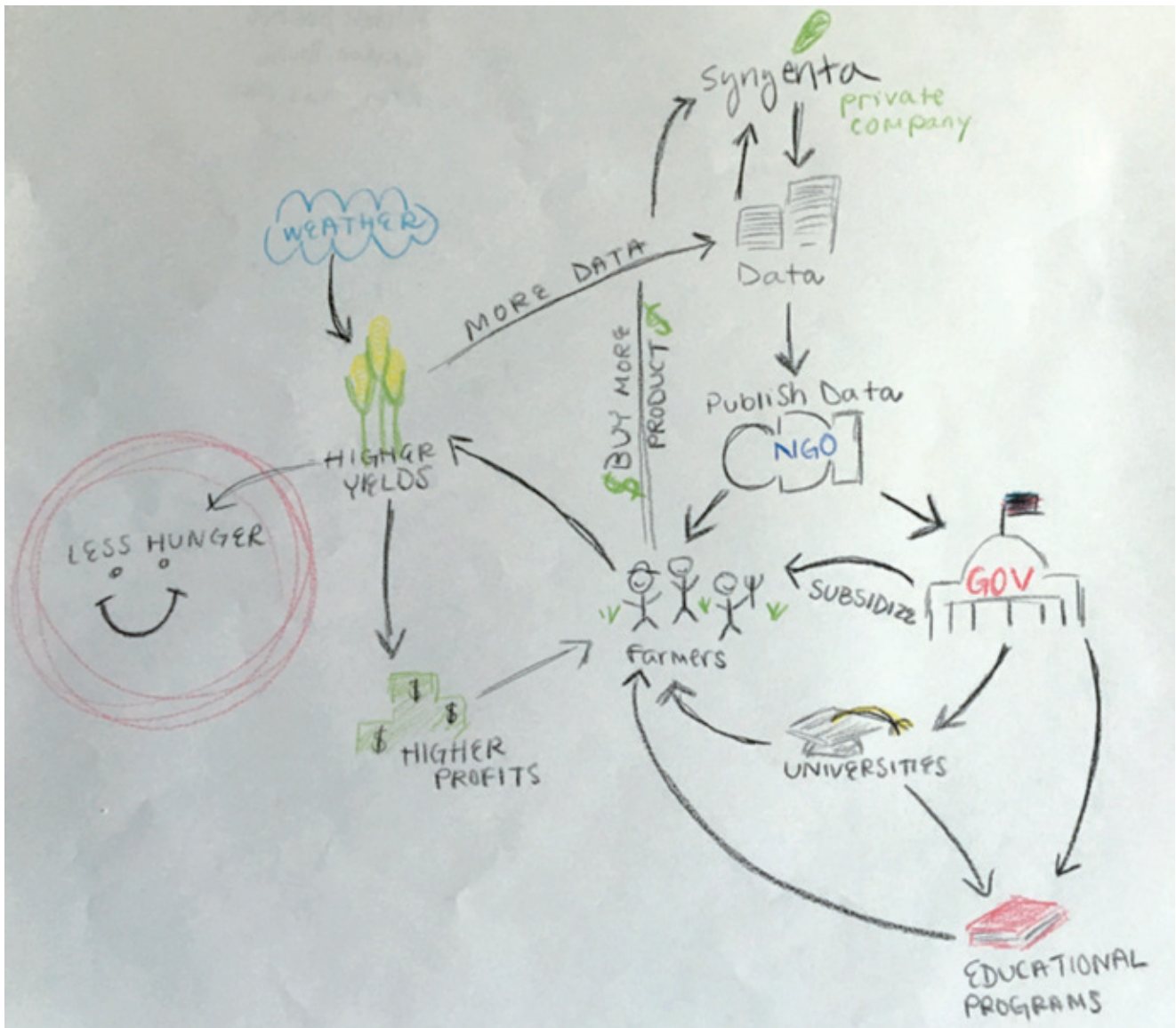
As a first step in the process, students work together to locate a CSSP of interest and then use crayons or colored markers to “draw and color” the partnership and describe linkages.

Outcomes and Moving Forward

Overall, the SWIF case experience is both challenging and rewarding for students and faculty. In settings where practitioners are involved, students become embedded in the complexities inherent in these partnerships. Practitioners also experience the fun of working with students, contributing to their learning, and learning more about themselves in the process. All parties stand to benefit when the cases are interesting enough to be presented or published—an area I will continue to focus on in the future to engage students even more. Thus far, several cases emerging from my courses have been submitted to case competitions (see also pp. 64-67) or conferences; one is being readied for submission to a case research journal. In that instance, the students contacted a government official in

Student Challenges	Suggestions
Students, especially undergraduates, underestimate the effort required. Even a short case can be very difficult to write. They also tend naturally to focus on the case and forget the importance of the teaching note or rush to complete it at the very end.	Provide a very detailed schedule with many checkpoints. For example, I ask students to present short reports during the semester, devoting some class time to these presentations, especially in the beginning. Students also work in loose teams during class meetings to identify partnerships related to the Sustainable Development Goals and report their progress. They may organize subsequently around these groups and topics or not. The teaching note also should be the focus of early emphasis, and students must develop teaching objectives for their cases from the start. (See Figure 1 for an example.)
Students may have trouble getting data or waiting on respondents to respond, delaying their progress.	This barrier is really difficult. Faculty must help students decide if they should continue waiting or move on to other ideas or projects that might prove more fruitful.
Students may have lots of experience writing academic papers or reports, but case writing is very different. Students need help to develop the unique writing skills associated with telling a compelling story. In addition, they often choose overly broad topics.	Students should plan to produce two drafts during the semester, with substantial coaching and feedback in the interim. Some students may need help identifying the case focus (e.g., with primary data, the focal partnership per group; with secondary data, the specific industry or societal issue), which usually means they need to narrow their focus.
Students have difficulty linking theory to the case material.	Again, the instructor is key here and can help students identify linkages, such as the collaboration continuum, process frameworks, shared value approaches, change management literature, or CSSP leadership frameworks, to name a few.
Students have difficulty identifying a moment of tension in a story (i.e., the hook).	Instructor coaching can encourage students to tell the story verbally to help them find the key points.
The final case might not leave room for reasonable people to disagree about what should be done. This tendency stems from students’ greater expertise in writing reports or other persuasive materials.	It is helpful to have students list the pros and cons of several different decisions, about midway through the project, so they can ensure that all these options get balanced treatment in the case.

Table 2. Student challenges and suggestions for faculty



As a first step in the process, students work together to locate a CSSP of interest and then use crayons or colored markers to “draw and color” the partnership and describe linkages, in this case a partnership around open data in agriculture.

Figure 1. Identifying collaborations

Sierra Leone who was struggling with illegal fishing and contemplating a partnership with an environmental group that uses direct action tactics. Another student embedded in a CSSP in Madagascar and wrote a case pertaining to the efforts of local groups to collaborate with a mining company. Yet another group critically evaluated a cause-related CSSP in which a local restaurant provided a meal in Haiti for every meal purchased in the restaurant. As these great stories indicate, the lessons need to be shared more broadly. After all, everyone loves a good story.

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by Lili Mundle

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Practitioner Cases as Teaching and Learning Resources: An Introduction

Case studies provide students, academics and practitioners with an opportunity to understand how cross-sector societal partnerships (CSSPs) work on the ground. To improve the chances of our readers finding a relevant case, this article extends the case study resources presented in the **ARSP 8** (pp. 37-39) by introducing a selection of practitioner-oriented platforms with case study materials. In selecting these platforms, we focused on scope and complementarity so as to provide a portfolio of diverse case materials in a variety of fields across the globe. Additionally, we identified and differentiated between two platform types: those that present cases focused in particular on the “what” of partnering and those featuring cases emphasizing the “how”.

Platforms Featuring “What” Case Studies

“What” case studies provide brief profiles of CSSPs and cover information such as focal activities, partners, and location. Respective platforms provide users with an overview of the CSSP landscape and can give insights into questions such as:

1. What types of activities are undertaken in a CSSP?
2. Who are the usual or potential partners?
3. In which geographical areas are CSSP activities high or low?
4. In which sectors (water, health, etc.) are CSSPs active?

“What” cases can be powerful tools for enabling practitioners to understand the partnering landscape and identify where a partnership may be needed, with whom to partner and/or how to engage with other relevant CSSPs. As there is no overarching database of all CSSPs worldwide, academics can use platforms featuring “what” case studies as a starting point for finding particular cases they want to explore in greater depth, while students can get a sense of the wide variety of partnering activities that fall under the umbrella term CSSP.

Platforms:

- The **Partnerships for the SDGs Platform** has a **database** of voluntary partnerships and commitments for the SDGs (2209 cases as of 03.2017).
- The **SIDS (Small Islands Developing States) Action Platform** provides a databank of **SIDS Partnerships** (307 cases as of 03.2017).
- **Partnerships 2030** provides **profiles** of international CSSPs with German partners (7 cases, as of 03.2017).
- **Devex Impact** provides a **databank** of various types of CSSPs worldwide (925 cases, as of 03.2017).
- **DeveloPPP.de** provides **project examples** of partnerships between private enterprises and German development cooperation actors (40 cases, as of 03.2017).
- The **UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence** provides, among others, five minute **video cases** of contractual public-private partnerships (PPPs) (6 cases, as of 03.2017).

Users of these freely accessible case study databases can typically filter cases by country, partners and sector engagement. For platforms created or revamped following the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, CSSPs can also be classified by the SDGs they seek to support.

Platforms Featuring “How” Case Studies

“How” case studies focus primarily on the processes behind partnering. They are typically longer than their “what” case study counterparts and integrate lessons learned and best practice principles of partnering. These case studies provide insights into questions such as:

1. What key challenges arise during partnering?
2. How do CSSPs overcome these challenges to achieve their goal?
3. What essential stages or activities do partnerships undergo?

By this means, readers may gain a better understanding, for example, of how long it takes to gather partners, broker a partnership agreement and set up a partnership. For practitioners, this information is essential in order to weigh the costs and benefits of joining, brokering or funding a CSSP. In addition, students and academics can use these “how” cases to study not only the day-to-day challenges and successes of partnering, but also the practices of those brokering and facilitating CSSPs.

Platforms:

- **The Intersector Project** provides two to three-page **case studies** of CSSPs across the U.S. (40 cases, as of 03.2017). The cases are structured around one individual who was integral to driving the CSSP’s work. Through the lens of his or her actions and skills, the case is broken down into: 1) a brief description of the problem which the CSSP sought to address; 2) a graphical representation of the partners by societal sector, what they contributed to the partnerships and an overview of their collaboration results; 3) what skillset the person facilitating the effort brought to the partnership; 4) how the partnership worked and employed best practice to achieve its goals; and 5) the result of the CSSP’s work.
- **The Partnering Initiative (TPI)** offers longer **case studies** (up to 56 pages) of CSSPs working around the globe (9 cases, as of 03.2017). While there is no

single structure that every case study follows, all incorporate the following key elements: the partners, the problem to be addressed by the CSSP, the process of addressing it, the challenges faced along the way and how these were overcome.

- **The Partnership Brokers Association (PBA)** presents one in-depth **case study series** (totaling over 60 pages) as well as several other **cases** (each approximately 20 pages) of partnerships around the world (3 cases, as of 03.2017). These focus on partnering processes, such as governance, funding, managing divergence and team building. Working with a story-capture approach, the cases incorporate numerous quotes from partners to yield insights into CSSPs’ processes.

“What” cases can be powerful tools for enabling practitioners to understand the partnering landscape and identify where a partnership may be needed, with whom to partner and/or how to engage with other relevant CSSPs.

The practitioner platforms presented are only an introduction to the various resources available. Further development of this list would be very welcome, to give practitioners more planning resources, enable students to dive into the richness of CSSPs and provide academics with a baseline for quantitative studies. If you would like to add a practitioner platform, please contact [lili.mundle\(at\)giz.de](mailto:lili.mundle@giz.de).





by Helena H. Knight

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The Imprint of CSSIs on Case Writing Competitions: A Review of Case Competitions via The Case Centre

Case writing competitions are a significant source of high quality case studies, arguably the most effective and straightforward tools to communicate the complexity of many cross-sector management situations. Case writing competitions benefit from a steady pool of followers from across academic and practitioner circles because they offer a desirable platform to showcase the outcomes of case development. Developing cases for submission to competitions also provides opportunities for academics to engage their students outside the traditional classroom instruction, and encourages collaborative learning between practitioners and academia. This article offers an overview of case writing competitions with the aim of teasing out the key benefits of these competitions for the ARSP community. It provides background information on competitions which may be of interest to the ARSP community and showcases winning CSSI related cases as a source of inspiration for best practice, as well as high quality educational resource.

Case writing competitions offer a range of benefits to the ARSP community. First, for academics, students, and industry leaders alike, these competitions offer an

opportunity to have the quality of their work recognised by highly esteemed establishments. The rigorous judging process by expert committees from varied backgrounds ensures that the winning cases represent leading intellectual contributions in their respective categories. Cases judged as the top contributors to academic excellence also carry substantial financial rewards, publication opportunities and access to conferences or memberships of the related professional body.

Second, aside from the unilateral personal rewards for authors, many competitions actively encourage that instructors collaborate with students and practitioners in writing cases, which further contributes to multilateral knowledge sharing. Such knowledge exchange has been recognised as a vital ingredient in the move towards collaborative, innovation economies, which are at the forefront of sustainable societal development¹. Moreover, by helping to disseminate cases that discuss CSSI-related key challenges and best practices, and encourage the application of suitable theoretical frameworks, case competitions may help integrate the CSSI field and facilitate more rigorous education of the future leaders. For the ARSP community, browsing through the winning cases makes for a rich source of inspiration when developing teaching and training materials.

Case Writing Competitions Classifications

To offer an overview of popular competitions with CSSI remit, this review explored the **29 competitions listed by The Case Centre** in January 2016². The Case Centre is one of the leading establishments focused on spreading the case method in education globally, among others by promoting and serving as a hub for multiple case writing competitions. Each of the explored competitions follows a specific set of criteria, yet some basic classifications can be discerned applying to the participation criteria, the process, and deliverables.

In the criteria for participation, cases vary by focusing on students only (further restrictions relate to graduate/postgraduate status), by restricting participation demographically (authors must be of specific nationality), or by allowing for open access participation. Regarding the process, many competitions simply require submission of published or unpublished cases, while student-focused competitions show process differences. Here, cases may (a) be written under the supervision of an instructor at their home institution and submitted for panel selection; (b) written, submitted, and presented to a committee of the organising institutions; or (c) require students to travel to the organising institution and work on developing a solution to an assigned case.

The rigorous judging process by expert committees from varied backgrounds ensures that the winning cases represent leading intellectual contributions in their respective categories.

With regard to the case deliverables, a teaching note typically needs to accompany the case. Further, each competition has a set of tailored submission criteria available in the author guidelines. For example, preference may be given to specific geographical regions in which the case story unfolds or topics may be restricted. Of particular interest for the ARSP community are competitions with tracks on sustainable management practices and business ethics. Table 1 gives an overview of these competitions based on the Case Centre's list.

Additionally, there are competitions that specifically focus on socially oriented management practices (see Table 2).

Competition Title	ARSP Relevant Competition Particularities	Deadlines	Prizes
UMT Sialkot Case Study Competition	Track: Ethics and Social Responsibility	usually July	Winner: PKR20,000* Runner Up: PKR10,000 (*approx. €180)
Arthur W. Page Society's Corporate Communications Case Study Competition	Student competition focused on corporate communications and the practice of PR Tracks: Social Responsibility; Government Relations	January	Grand Prize: Student(s) \$5,000 Faculty Advisor(s) \$1,500 Other prizes: 1st \$2,500; 2nd \$1,500; 3rd \$800 Faculty Advisor(s) 1st \$650; 2nd \$350; 3rd \$200
EFMD Case Writing Competition	Tracks: Corporate Social Responsibility; Responsible Leadership; Inclusive Business Models; Sustainable Production Systems	October	€2,000 Award per category
The Case Centre Writing Competitions	Track: Ethics and Social Responsibility	October	€1,500 per award category

Table 1: Case Competitions with CSSI-Related Tracks

CASE COMPETITIONS

Competition Title	Competition Particularities	Deadlines	Prizes
<i>oikos Case Writing Competition</i>	New teaching cases on corporate sustainability, social entrepreneurship and sustainable finance.	December	For each track: 1 st prize: CHF3,000 *, 2 nd : CHF2,000, 3 rd : CHF1,000. (*CHF10 = approx. €9.4)
<i>European FIR-PRI Award Finance & Sustainability: Case Study Competition</i>	Submissions to category 'Best Academic Case Study' in finance and sustainability. Criteria: Academic case studies must have first been implemented in an academic programme during the specified period of time.	April	€5,000
<i>Carl Menconi Ethics Case Writing Competition</i>	Teaching cases focused on business ethics, with application to management accounting and finance.	January	\$500
<i>E-PARCC Teaching Case and Simulation Competition</i>	New teaching cases on collaborative public management, networks, governance, and/or problem solving	February	\$5,000 Best Teaching Case \$1,000 Honourable Mention

Table 2: Competitions with an Overarching CSSI-Related Focus

Award-Winning CSSI Cases Paving the Way

Many cases among the competition winners, particularly those focused on social enterprise and/or CSR, address CSSI-related issues as a side-topic. However, in at least 14 winning cases since 2011, the central story focuses on some form of CSSI (see Table 3 and **ResearchGate** for an extended table). With the scholarly credence guaranteed by the rigorous judging process, these cases are on the forefront of advancing the CSSI discipline and may provide a source of inspiration for the ARSP community. We hope this article has inspired your interest in case competitions and we look forward to seeing the collection of CSSI related cases grow; perhaps with your case.

For the ARSP community, browsing through the winning cases makes for a rich source of inspiration when developing teaching and training materials.



Case Title & Author(s)**Arthur W. Page Society's Corporate Communications Case Study Competition**

BP's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Crisis and their Recovery Through Team USA Olympic Sponsorship: An Analysis of Reputation Management and Corporate Sponsorships
Neha Jain; Advisor: John Trybus

EFMD Case Writing Competition

WWF's Living Planet @ Work: Championed by HP
Oana Branzei and Haiying Lin

Accenture Development Partnership (A) and (B)
Michelle Rogan and Christiane Bode

Planting the Seeds of Change: The Ethiopia Commodity Exchange
Lea Stadtler and Gilbert Probst

mothers2mothers
Cynthia Schweer and Roger Strang

Walmart: Love, Earth
Craig Smith and Robert J. Crawford

AquaSure: Project Finance - Victorian Desalination Plant
Pierre Hillion and Jean Wee

E-PARCC Teaching Case and Simulation Competition

Community Engagement for Organizational Change: Planning for a Sustainable Future for the City of Seattle's Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute
Alexandra Wakeman Rouse, Daniel J. Evans and Stephen B. Page

The End of Diversity Policy? Wake County Public Schools and Student Assignment
Jenni Owen, and Megan Kauffmann

oikos Case Writing Competition

Friends of the Children: Strategies for Scaling Impact
Jacen Greene, Nicki Yechin Lee and Eric Nelsen

IFC Funding of Dinant Project: Call for Overhaul of Risk Assessment for Sustainable Finance
D. Satish and Manish Agarwal

IKEA and the Better Cotton Initiative
Stefano Pogutz

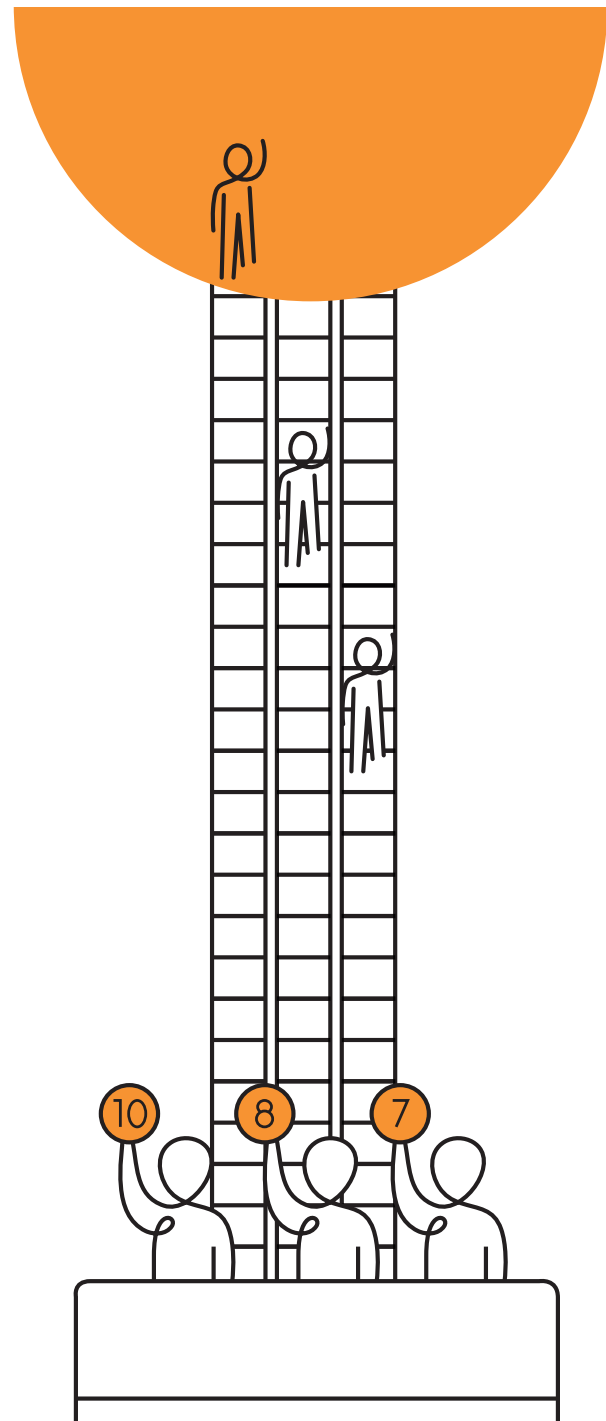
Building and Scaling a Cross-Sector Partnership: Oxfam America and Swiss Re Empower Farmers in Ethiopia
Jonathan Doh, Ted London and Vasilia (Lea) Kilibarda

Of Orangutans and Chainsaws: Cargill, Inc. Confronts The Rainforest Action Network's Palm Oil Advocacy
Ram Subramanian

Table 3: Award-Winning CSSI Cases

Endnotes

1. Atkinson, R.D. and Ezzel, S. J. 2012. *Innovation Economics: the race for global advantage*. Yale University Press: New Haven.
2. The Case Centre <http://www.thecasecentre.org/educators/case-method/competitions/casewriting#EFMD>





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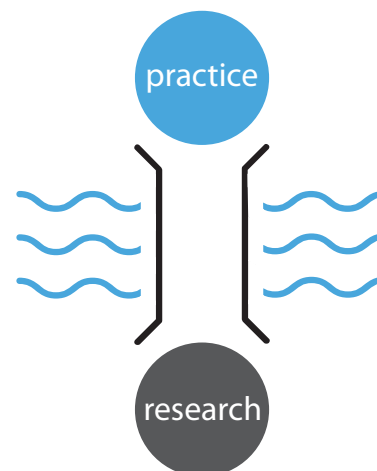
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by Arno Kourula

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Academic Roles in Bridging Gaps



The research section of the ARSP profiles leading academic thinkers, initiatives and projects on cross-sector partnerships around the world. It presents new methodological insights and aims to increase discussion about the impact of scholarly research. This year our stellar team provides a lot of food for thought as to how academics can bridge gaps across geographies, backgrounds and disciplines. In this quest for impact, we explore the roles of partner, co-creator, platform and translator.

First, our Associate Editor Adolf Acquaye presents a research project titled **Global Certifying Partnerships**, led by Professor Pieter Glasbergen (Maastricht University). This joint program between Maastricht University in the Netherlands and the University of Lampung in Indonesia shows how academics can function as partners in impactful knowledge creation. Second, a team of early career earth system governance academics provide an excellent overview of innovative participatory research methods that could be applied in a variety of fields and contexts. These co-creation approaches advance our understanding of global cross-sector challenges. Third, our Associate Editor Greetje Schouten interviews Professor Pratima (Tima) Bansal (Ivey Business School) on how the **Network for Business Sustainability** is helping to span the chasm between academic research and the world of practice, by acting as an innovation platform. Fourth, Associate Editor Lauren McCarthy asks Stephen Khan, Editor of *The Conversation*, how scholars should translate and communicate their findings to the wider public.

In the Thought Gallery, we hand over the reins to internationally recognized thought leaders to elaborate on their current thinking and suggest a path forward in partnering. This year's issue features three innovators from the U.K.'s Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (The RSA): Matthew Taylor (Chief Executive and ARSP Advisory Board Member), Rowan Conway (Director of Innovation and Development) and Ian Burbidge (Associate Director of Public Services). Their contribution offers insights into how top-down and bottom-up approaches can be combined successfully. Subsequently, we will hear from three academic pioneers, Professors Rob van Tulder (Rotterdam School of Management, ARSP Advisory Board Member), Juliane Reinecke (Warwick Business School) and Jimmy Donaghey (Warwick Business School), who provide an overview of their research on cross-sector partnerships. Van Tulder offers provocative insights on how to save the partnership paradigm from its staunchest supporters. Reinecke and Donaghey take us back to the Rana Plaza building collapse and present what has happened since. All these contributions demonstrate the diverse roles academics can play in bridging the gap between research and practice.

If you would like to suggest projects, profiles, or themes for this section next year, please contact the Section Editor Arno Kourula: A.E.Kourula@uva.nl



Promoting Effective Partnering

The Partnerships Resource Centre (PrC) is delighted to sponsor the ARSP Research Section, now for the third year in a row. The ARSP community is important to us – in fact, it is essential to our work.

The PrC carries out fundamental and applied research, develops tools and delivers on- and off-line learning modules and executive training in the area of cross-sector partnerships for sustainable development. Located in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and embedded in the **Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University**, we focus on understanding partnerships for sustainable development. By doing so we aim to enhance scientific knowledge about partnerships, as well as strengthen partnership practice. Clearly, our goals and interests overlap a great deal with those of the ARSP.

One of the projects we have been working on this past year has been the **Promoting Effective Partnering (PEP)** facility. In the project, a group of leading thinkers in partnering has been working together to pool their

knowledge and rich practical experience to identify and share what it takes to really raise the bar of effective partnering. These leading thinkers are **CLI, PBA, PiP, PrC**, and **TPI**.

Go to <http://www.effectivepartnering.org> to see what we have come up with to enable practitioners across the globe to improve their partnering efforts and bring about transformational results. The information presented is not intended to be prescriptive – rather, we invite partners to question our approaches as well as their own. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. The next step for PEP will be to activate a vibrant platform offering opportunities to learn from the experience of peers and to seek support when things are not going according to plan. Please feel free to join PEP!

The PrC welcomes engagement in its current and future research projects from the ARSP Community all over the world. Contact Training and Communications coordinator Anne Marike Lokhorst to discuss opportunities for interaction: lokhorst@rsm.nl. Follow us on Twitter: @RSM_PrC

Project Team



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Social and Economic Effects of Partnering for Sustainable Change in Agricultural Commodity Chains: A Southern Perspective

Introduction to the Project

Partnerships between businesses and nongovernmental organizations in the global North that address production of agricultural commodities in the global South have been used as a basis to improve the social and environmental aspects of production, while maintaining or improving the economic prospects of trade. These collaborative agreements have become commonplace since the mid-1990s and have been delivered through private sustainability standards, including for agricultural commodities like palm oil, coffee, and cocoa.

Despite these initiatives, the current state of research indicates disagreement and intellectual tensions concerning the impact of these partnerships on the stakeholders they seek to benefit. For instance, while some studies have found positive effects on the establishment and functioning of producer organizations and on health and education of smallholder farmers, other studies have found that certification is unable to guarantee premium prices and that the bargaining power of farmers remains weak following certification. It is therefore unclear how and to what extent certification schemes contribute to

the welfare of producers in Southern countries.

The Social and Economic Effects of Partnering for Sustainable Change in Agricultural Commodity Chains in Indonesia research therefore seeks to unravel some of the issues and potential benefits that pertain to such partnerships. This research starts with the need for a problem-driven approach, instead of a policy-driven one. The difference between these approaches is based on the underlying assumptions and premise taken to resolve the conundrum of the potential impacts of such partnerships. In the problem-driven approach, the values, and interests of smallholder farmers and their institutional context are put at centre stage. In contrast, the policy-driven approach implicitly assumes the effectiveness of certification standards as mechanisms to solve social and environmental issues of the farmers, such as improved livelihoods.

The Research Partnership

The project (2012-2017) involves a bilateral cooperation between Maastricht University and Lampung University, with the financial support from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the Directorate General of Higher Education (DIKTI) of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. The global coffee, palm oil and cocoa chains serve as main fields of research in the assessment part of the program. The research combines governance theory and economic theory and applies a variety of quantitative and qualitative integrative/sustainability assessment methods.

Potential Outcomes of Partnerships in Agricultural Commodity Chains

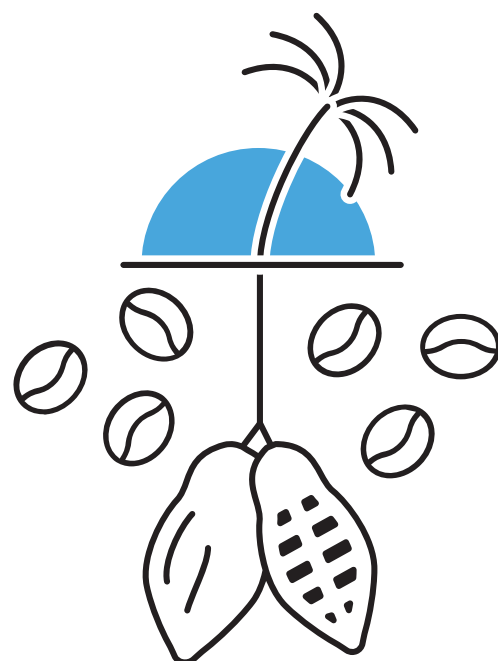
In general, the research indicates that certified farmers perceive higher benefits than uncertified farmers. Certification provides training to the farmers which improves the quality and quantity of their production, strengthens organizational capacities and creates market opportunities. However, this is still an unspecified observation. The research also reveals a lot of conditionalities. Below we summarize some of the most important ones.

1. First, the research shows a difference between the framing of the problem certification aims to solve. Certification schemes frame the problem in terms of negative environmental and social effects, while farmers frame it in terms of low income. What is meant

to be a sustainability tool, which consumers are assumed to prefer because of the environmental and social conditions of production, tends to become a marketing tool to increase the farmers' income when applied in the field. This does not necessarily mean that farmers do not value environmental or social aspects of their practices, but their preferences regarding certifications are primarily economically driven.

2. The different way of framing the problem is accompanied by a low understanding of certification on the part of the farmers. Many farmers do not recognize the differences between the schemes; they often know that they participate in a certification scheme, but not in which one. This can partly be explained by the fact that a certificate (in coffee) is in the hands of the exporter, who owns different certificates at the same time and provides similar training to all farmers, independent from the scheme they participate in.

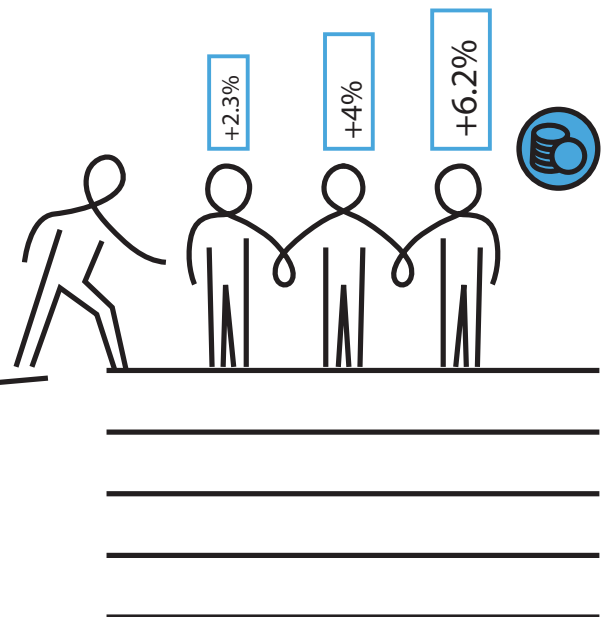
In the problem-driven approach, the values, and interests of smallholder farmers and their institutional context are put at centre stage.





Certified farmers perceive higher benefits than uncertified farmers

3. Those farmers who participate in a certification scheme generally receive only slightly higher prices for their harvest than uncertified farmers. In coffee this is approximately 2.3-6.2% per kilogram. In palm oil it is 4-5%. However, in both coffee and palm oil, certified farmers also have higher costs than uncertified farmers. Consequently differences in profits between certified and uncertified farmers are very small and, in the case of coffee, not even statistically significant. We also found that the higher prices paid for certified products do not so much result from certification, as from side effects of certification, such as better organization of the farmer groups and training in Good Agricultural Practices. Accordingly, the domestic market is willing to pay a higher price for good quality coffee.
4. The research shows that the economic rent resulting from certified coffee is relatively low for farmers. Roasters profit most as they receive around 95% of the additional price paid for certified Robusta and about 83% for Arabica coffee, while the farmers receive only 1.4% and 5.6% respectively.
5. The research also highlights the importance of a premium fee for maintaining the profitability of sustainability certification. However, in practice the farmers do not always receive a premium fee for their certified product.
6. For coffee smallholders and independent palm oil smallholders, it is hardly possible to participate in the certifications if they depend only on their own resources. Lack of capital keeps smallholder farmers dependent on middlemen to borrow cash to support their household needs. In turn, they must sell their commodities to middlemen at any price demanded.
7. Smallholders cannot directly access certification individually. To be able to participate, the individual farmers must organize themselves into farmer groups. The research shows that it is not easy to organize farmers and even more difficult to expect the new farmer organizations to provide adequate support services, such as data recording and other managerial functions. Many farmer groups are malfunctioning.
8. An interesting phenomenon is that governments from some developing countries are currently in the process of developing their own, public sustainability standards and certifications. Indonesia is leading in this respect. The Indonesian government developed its own, supposedly mandatory, sustainability standard and certification scheme for palm oil – Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO). The same kind of scheme



is proceeding for coffee and cocoa. However, our research shows that Indonesia currently lacks the implementation capacity to make the public standards a viable alternative to the private standards and regulations.

Global-North based standard-setting and certifying arrangements are important initiators of change

Benefits Beyond Partnerships

Impacts of the Research Project

The project has established that a value chain approach, as an inducement to more sustainable agricultural production, is insufficient to bring about the desired impacts of sustainable change and improvements in smallholder livelihood. A policy-driven approach may therefore be relevant, but not enough. The project further proposes

sustainable intensification and diversification of conventional agriculture and questions the long-term effects of the private system of sustainability standards and certifications.

Conclusion

The research shows that private global-North based standard-setting and certifying arrangements are important initiators of change in the field of trade in agricultural commodities, in that they create an awareness of sustainability aspects of the production of agricultural commodities. We have also learned from the certifications that there is still a large potential to improve the quality and quantity of production and therefore the earning capacity of the farmers. However, the findings also cast doubt on the sustainability standards and certifications, in particular their transformative capacity. The question arises as to whether voluntary certifications, even if further optimized, can ever be effective tools for bringing about systemic sustainable change that fundamentally improves the welfare of smallholders. Constraints relate to the economic opportunities for farmers under certification and the interconnected power relations in the value chains. Private certifications therefore need to reconsider their contribution to the general transformative capacity within their industries.



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Innovative Participatory Research Methods in Earth System Governance

Earth System Governance: an Empirical Phenomenon and a Political Project

Current environmental problems are often extremely complex, uncertain, and affecting multiple actors and institutions across sectors and scales. Earth System Governance (ESG) is a

field of research that is highly relevant for understanding social interactions across scales and sectors and addressing complex problems. ESG refers to the broad collection of formal and informal rules, mechanisms, and networks ranging from the local to the global scale which deal with environmental changes¹. ESG can be seen as both an empirical phenomenon and as a political project². It refers

to a social phenomenon observed in the interactions and activities of many international regimes, bureaucracies, local and transnational activists groups, and expert networks. At the same time, it is also a political effort to unite stakeholders, aiming to strengthen the institutions and networks addressing complex governance challenges associated with ESG. Participatory research is one very important way to appeal to ESG both as a social phenomenon - as a way to better understand the complex empirical dynamics associated with ESG - and as a political endeavour - by engaging different stakeholders in (academic) research and fostering processes of learning.

Objectives for participatory research methods in dealing with complex problems

Participatory methods are often praised for their assumed contribution to addressing complex problems. To explore whether participatory methods actually live up to their potential, it is useful to take a look at the underlying objectives. We have identified 6 different objectives which share the ultimate aim of addressing complex problems, but differ regarding whom they serve, and how they contribute to addressing problems, (Figure 1). The sections below present four examples of participatory research methods in ESG research, and discuss their respective objectives and challenges. This demonstrates the unique contributions different methods can make towards addressing the complex environmental problems characteristic of ESG.

Participatory Scenario Planning

Scenarios can be defined as 'what if' stories about the future, told in words, numbers or images. Rather than attempting to forecast a single future, they represent multiple plausible directions that future drivers of change may take³. By exploring alternative future worlds and how drivers of change relate to each other, scenarios provide a unique way to make decisions on how to deal with complex problems and future uncertainty. Scenario planning is a particularly useful tool in the formulation of policies that aim to manage complex environmental problems such as food security and climate change^{4,5}.

Both the development and use of scenarios for decision-making offer the opportunity to involve a wide range of stakeholders. In participatory scenario development, a dialogue between individuals - experts and context-specific stakeholders - serves to integrate multiple

perspectives to collectively imagine and explore different plausible futures⁶. Scenarios can thus promote a shared sense of responsibility and mutual learning. Once developed, scenarios can be used to test the strength of existing plans, policies or investments, or help develop new ones, contributing to making informed decisions. Challenges in achieving these objectives remain, such as the tension between dealing with urgent short term issues and long-term sustainable development; a bias towards traditional planning; and decision-makers' discomfort with communicating undesirable futures. As a result, many attempts to improve decision making through foresight go unused.

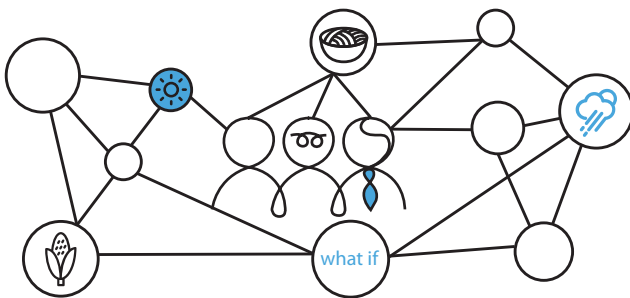
There are many instances of success employing participatory scenarios approaches in planning and governance. In **Costa Rica**, for example, the Ministry of Environment used a scenarios approach to design the countries Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, testing the feasibility of transformation towards a low-emission energy and transport sector. Other examples include the work of the CGIAR Research Programme on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security **scenarios project** and the **TRANSMANGO** project on the future of food production and consumption in Europe.

Games

In the world of planning and policy, games are increasingly used as tools for exploring the future⁷. Games simulate real systems and issues and allow players to explore different future worlds, similar to simulations and scenarios, for example. Games, however, have specific added benefits because they explore potential problems of the future from the perspectives of people living and working in the future, where players can immerse themselves in specific roles and experiment with different strategies. When players are actively involved in designing games, limitations imposed by pre-determined game structure can be bypassed. Co-designing games also raises relevant governance questions, such as: 'What are rules and roles in this future? Who has more power? How does the economy work?' Game co-design, in addition to being well-suited for exploring inclusive and sustainable governance options, also supports several of the goals in this paper (Figure 1), including in particular mutual learning, informed decision-making, shared ownership and enabling access to methods of adjusting jointly fostering transformation.

A key challenge for using games for planning is the translation of game-based experimentation to policies and actions. If games are designed with specific policy concerns in mind, however, this gap can be overcome. Game design is not always easy, which will require researchers and policy makers to develop their design skills. Increasing game complexity to fit with technical research results can make quick prototyping and playtesting more difficult. When larger groups are involved, the game may also become more dependent on technology and therefore less flexible and transparent.

Though it is still a new approach, we are actively experimenting with game co-design for the exploration of sustainable futures. In the TRANSMANGO project on the future of food in Europe, game designers, researchers and practitioners from around Europe meet up in a number of 'game jams' where a wide range of games are developed – each game presenting a different interactive future world. A number of game prototypes can be found on the website of partner project *JamToday*.



Participatory Methods in Global Environmental Assessments

Global environmental assessments (GEAs) are one of the most elaborate, formal means of addressing the complex environmental issues which characterize ESG research by assembling and organizing credible, policy-relevant knowledge in a legitimate manner. These processes provide novel platforms through which a diversity of actors can participate in problem framing, assessment of impacts, and discussions of potential policy responses at multiple scales⁸. This has been done for example through scoping meetings, online discussion platforms, regional-scale consultations or workshops, outreach meetings, review processes, and summary negotiations.

Given the diversity of GEAs (for example, see this *catalogue*) and the even broader diversity of methods for participation, all of the objectives in Figure 1 have been applicable at one point or another. However, four objectives for participation have been particularly prominent: providing scientifically sound knowledge, making informed decisions, shared responsibility and ownership, and enabling mutual learning⁹. A first challenge is realising fair and balanced representation, especially in light of the huge pool of potential stakeholders. This can be addressed by employing transparent criteria for selecting stakeholders explicitly aligned with the objectives. A second challenge is dealing with the power asymmetries between different actors in a process dealing with controversial issues and high stakes. To overcome this, GEAs can balance the control exerted by different actors, foster fair and open deliberation and ensure that participants are treated as equals.

Many opportunities exist for actors from all walks of life to participate in GEAs. For example, the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in particular is seeking broader participation (information on how to get involved can be found *here*), and engaging with the *Major Groups and Stakeholders* branch can facilitate participation in United Nations Environment Programme assessments.

Adaptive Institutional Pathways

The role of institutions is central in ESG. Not only do they need to adapt to changing social and environmental conditions, but they can also influence the outcome of participatory processes. This double role of institutions underpins the concept of adaptive institutional pathways. Adaptive institutional pathways are a participatory planning approach combining scenario-guided planning and stakeholder workshops with reflexive methods of institutional analysis. The main goal is to imagine different ways in which institutions and the people involved or affected by them may react to complex problems. Rather than treating participatory processes as if they occur in isolation, adaptive institutional pathways seek to uncover, question and clarify relevant societal norms and structures that need to be taken into account to make responsible decisions. It is assumed in these approaches that planning and other processes where power dynamics are at play are themselves influencing participatory decision making. Hence, particular emphasis is given to the wider social

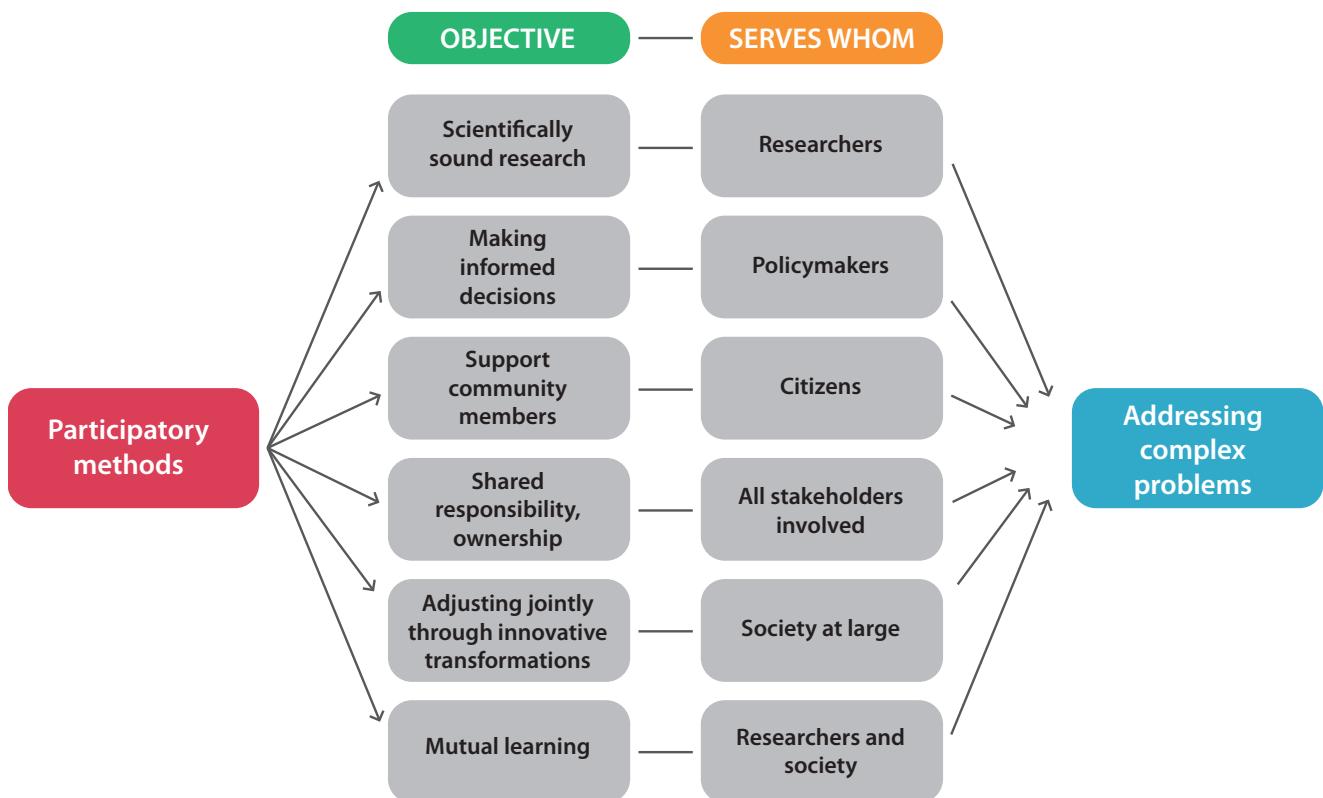


Figure 1. Objectives for participatory research methods in addressing complex problems, and the actor groups who are served by them.

ordering principles and power relations in which participatory planning processes are embedded^{10,11}.

Employing an adaptive institutional pathways approach relates primarily to two of the objectives shown in Figure 1. First, institutional pathways analyses can provide reliable, scientifically sound knowledge on policy implementation or the exploration of alternative pathway options, for example. Second, developing adaptive pathway scenarios emphasizing the institutional dimensions of ESG can increase the robustness, reliability and legitimacy of decision making.

One major challenge for this approach is the potential for bias amongst participants, for example towards information that confirms one's preconceptions or towards options based on numbers or quantifiable probabilities. Conducting research on adaptive institutional pathways

also strongly depends on mutual trust between decision makers, researchers and stakeholders, including the willingness of participants to challenge existing conventions and critically reflect on the status quo. Moreover, while the notion of adaptive pathways is increasingly applied in practice (see for example the project *Enabling Adaptive Pathways*), the institutional dimension of pathway planning remains underexplored.

Conclusion

Participatory research methods addressing complex environmental issues are highly promising in the sense that they relate to ESG both as a social and a political phenomenon, taking into account a wide variety of viewpoints in research aimed at facilitating learning as well as strengthening and informing both formal and informal decision-making at multiple scales. As we have shown, there are multiple objectives for participatory research

which are of different degrees of relevance from different perspectives. Although we have only highlighted a few examples out of the very large assortment of possible methods, our exploration of participatory scenario building, the use of games, engagement in GEAs, and adaptive institutional pathways nonetheless serve to shed light on many of the challenges facing participatory research methods more broadly.

It is important to consider means of overcoming these challenges in order to fulfil the promise of participatory research methods. Firstly, organizers and participants alike must acknowledge that engaging in participatory research methods is not simply a matter of ticking boxes – it requires continuous attention to the process as a whole and taking into account multiple points of view. Explicating the aims for the selection of participatory research methods can help to determine the type of approach while setting the standards for delivering on its promises. Determining transparent stakeholder selection criteria can help to ensure fair representation in a more legitimate manner. Building trust between participants is important to ensure the benefits of participation can extend beyond the research itself. Breaking down the divisions between different sectors or scientific domains is of the utmost importance among other things to facilitate the integration of knowledge from multiple perspectives to more comprehensively and collaboratively address problems. Explicitly addressing pre-existing power relations between different actors, including between different scientific disciplines and different governmental departments, and levelling the playing field is crucial to avoid excessive control by more powerful groups.

Participation should be structured to facilitate openness to alternative ideas and framings, despite the fact that all actors will come into a process with preconceptions regarding problems and potential solutions, encouraging creative and collective thinking.

More broadly, combining different approaches could potentially overcome some of the challenges facing individual participatory research methods. For example, the use of the explicitly future oriented methods discussed here – scenarios, gaming, adaptive institutional pathways- as inputs into GEAs has the potential of creating a more reflexive consideration of potential futures, while diminishing power asymmetries prevalent in traditional meetings where concrete policy options are discussed by restructuring engagement and more explicitly seeking to balance contributions and control. In turn, participation in GEAs can help to forge networks between stakeholders which can expand and strengthen existing participatory scenario planning, games, and adaptive institutional pathways. To overcome many of the challenges highlighted above, enable iterative improvement, and to encourage mutual benefits between different research methods, foresight methods should become more governance literate¹². This means applying ESG research to understanding and re-designing who is involved in foresight and other planning methods, being more reflexive on why they are conducted, what consequences these conditions have for what futures can be imagined, and how processes of foresight are practically integrated with governance processes. Because adaptive institutional pathways draw both on scenario-guided planning with institutional analysis, they represent both a current example and a starting point for further integrating ESG research into foresight methods.

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Entering the Gap: An Interview with Pratima (Tima) Bansal on the Network for Business Sustainability (NBS)

It is a Friday afternoon when the opportunity arises to interview Prof. Pratima Bansal on the Network for Business Sustainability (NBS), which she founded and continues to direct. What seemed like another activity on an already packed to do list, turned out to be one of the most inspirational interactions I have experienced in a long time.

Bansal is a professor at the Ivey Business School and the Director of the Centre on Building Sustainable Value. In 2012, she was awarded the Canada Research Chair in Business Sustainability and, in 2008, the Aspen's Institute title of Faculty Pioneer for Academic Leadership. Her research interests lie at the intersection of sustainability and strategy. On this occasion, I interviewed her in her capacity as the Executive Director for the Network for Business Sustainability (NBS).



NBS, a non-profit organization established in 2005, is a network of international academic experts and business leaders, which produces resources on important sustainability issues, with the goal of shaping management practice, as well as research. NBS envisions a world where business systems contribute to prosperous economies, healthy ecosystems and strong communities, aiming to enable business

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sustainability by fostering collaboration and co-creating knowledge. NBS commissions research on the business community's top sustainability challenges and manages the academic research process to ensure findings are relevant and actionable for industry.

In preparation for the interview, I had shared my interview questions with Bansal. However, at the beginning of the interview Bansal explains that the interview will probably take a different turn because of recent developments in NBS. For 8 months now they have been rethinking the network. 'NBS 2.0' will be launched shortly.

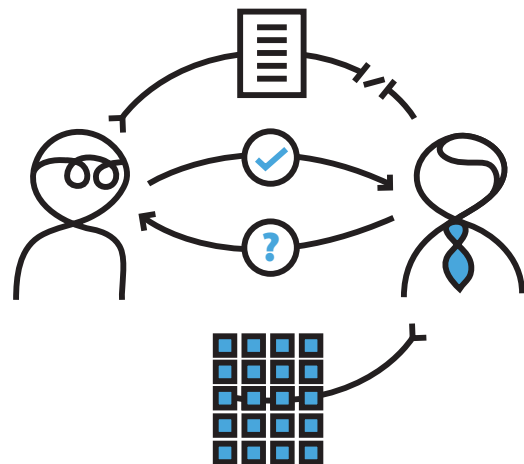
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This led us to think that we needed to do things differently: We found that when knowledge is put on paper it becomes static and is harder to absorb by managers. The best learning takes place in the interactions between academics and managers.

Greetje Schouten (GS): What was the rationale behind establishing NBS?

Pratima Bansal (PB): Let me start explaining that from a personal point of view. I had just been tenured, based on my research in sustainability. People that research sustainability and big world issues, tend to really care for these topics and want to make a difference, myself included. I was doing all this research as an academic and felt that I had no impact on practice. This was deeply frustrating to me. I wanted my work to have meaning, beyond a few academic citations. I also sensed that I wasn't the only one who felt this way and wanted to do something about it.

For ten years now, I have been committed to building bridges between research and practice. And, there has been quite the chasm to cross. At the beginning, I thought academics had two challenges: we were asking the wrong questions and we weren't answering the questions in a way that mattered to managers. In academia, we are trying to answer very deep and narrow types of questions. I was convinced that if we asked and answered the right questions, managers might actually read and use our research. And, then we would have a group of managers that worked with the research team to ensure that the research stayed on track and spoke their language. In the first phase of NBS – NBS 1.0 – we therefore let managers tell us what, according to them, were the most important questions. Academics could then answer those questions, together with managers.



In NBS 1.0 we solicited proposals from academics to conduct systematic literature reviews of the questions managers asked to get a clear picture of a broad research landscape. A systematic literature review could offer answers to a broader question and report on the body of evidence – not just a single, deep study. We involved a diverse group of actors and started answering approximately two research questions a year. After 10 years, we produced approximately 20 systematic reviews of the literature answering questions relevant to managers.

After 8 or 9 years, in 2014/2015, something happened: First, companies and managers started saying that they knew the literature by now. The novelty of our approach had worn off. Second, we still confronted a bit of a gap

We have found that three things are of key importance in breaking down silos: boundary spanners, boundary spaces and boundary objects.

between research and practice. Although we were really proud of what we had done, managers were still not putting the research into practice.

This led us to think that we needed to do things differently. We found that when knowledge is put on paper it becomes static and is harder to absorb by managers. The best learning seemed to take place in the interactions between academics and managers – the messy problem solving in the meetings when the researchers were building their systematic reviews of the literatures. It was not the reports themselves, but the co-production leading to the reports that was facilitating learning. It was in the events. Therefore, NBS 2.0 will have much more focus on conversations, events and on people and will approach the production of knowledge in a much more dynamic way.

GS: Could you explain what NBS 2.0 will look like in this regard? And does NBS 2.0 use specific research methodologies to be able to advance both research-based practice and practice-based research and to build bridges between research and practice?

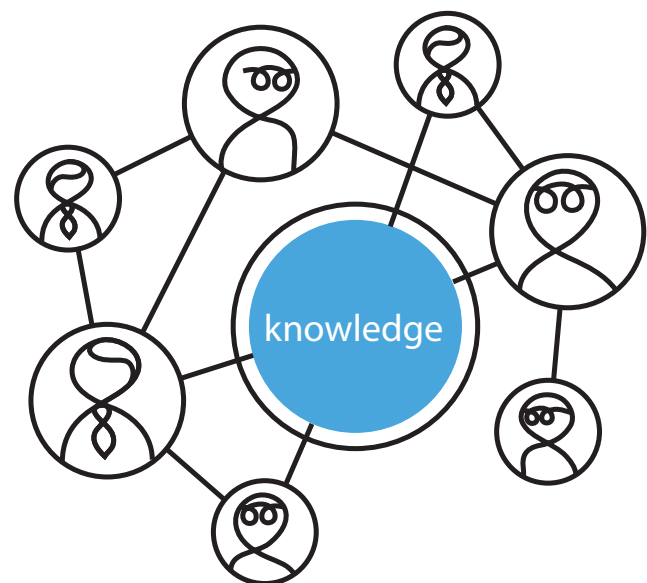
PB: First of all, we want to become an innovation platform. We do not merely want to contribute to identifying problems: principally, we want to create the space and opportunity to open up thinking about possibilities, rather than constraints. We want to create intellectual capital through the co-learning of academics, together with managers.

Second, we want to create micro-communities of researchers and managers that tackle a specific problem in a closed community and fixed timeline. For example, such a community could decide to address the question of how to measure the social impacts of companies. Managers, consultants and academics all have great insights and experience with this topic. In such a micro-community, people can collectively determine what is actually needed.

Subsequently, everyone can apply the generated knowledge in their own work and give back what they have found to the community. This is much more dynamic than in NBS 1.0.

Third, we aim to foster action through engaged scholarship, while ensuring the validity and reliability of our research. For example, we will start with a baseline assessment of firms to establish how they are currently innovating and collaborating on sustainability. Then, we will identify opportunities for the organization. We will observe the changes and assess these companies again after the changes are implemented. By involving several companies, we will collect data over time and across companies. This approach will ensure rigor in research, while at the same time building capacity in companies.

GS: One of the key principles of NBS is to “Cross Industry and Sectoral Boundaries – The Network will seek to break down the silos within and among the academic, industry, and government sectors by organizing events and activities that encourage collaboration”. This is very close to the aims and vision of the ARSP and we know that this can be extremely challenging. How does NBS go about breaking down these silos and what are the main challenges in this regard?



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PB: In NBS 2.0 we will apply what we have learned from NBS 1.0. We have found that three things are of key importance in breaking down silos: boundary spanners, boundary spaces and boundary objects.

1. A boundary spanner is a person with great facilitation skills who is able to translate between different types of languages, for example between managers and academics. 2. Boundary spaces are contact rich environments in which interaction takes place. Ideally, interaction is face to face or via video technology. It is very important to have a bounded amount of time for a project, as well as for meetings in these boundary spaces. (For example, we have a project of one year, in which we have weekly meetings of one hour.) 3. Boundary objects are tools that allow collaboration and interaction to happen. These are the mechanisms/artefacts that enable interactions to occur.

The key in realising impact is to move away from creating static knowledge and to approach knowledge in a much more dynamic manner. Entering the gap in between research and practice is essential for solving the big problems of our times.

Let me clarify through an example that Prof. Andy van de Ven told to me. When a man approaches a woman in a park, there is a good chance that she will be put off when he tries to talk to her. However, if they both are walking a dog, the conversation about the dogs is natural and can be a mechanism for initiating conversation. Through our insights, we found that boundary objects should be incomplete and in a language that everyone can speak, so no jargon. In most cases, then, we found that visual devices (such as Porter's Five Forces or Rockström's Planetary Boundaries) are especially effective. Boundary objects, spaces and spanners are extremely important in breaking down silos and for cross-sector collaboration to occur.

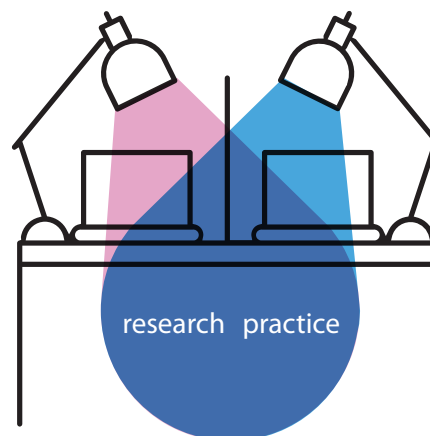
GS: Another key principle of NBS is "High Positive Impact – The Network will ensure that each of its activities are designed and implemented for maximum positive impact on their target audience". What are some lessons you are able to share with us on how NBS has been able to reach these high positive impacts? What are the main challenges in this regard?

PB: We think the key in realising impact is to move away from creating static knowledge and to approach knowledge in a much more dynamic manner. It is truly a battle for the head space of managers - a battle for attention. The world has changed and people's attention has become much more fragmented than it was. Presenting more information does not change the mind-sets of managers. Getting them involved is key. The journey itself is more important than the destination. We think it is about creating experiences that will realise impact.

GS: Does NBS aim to close or rather to bridge the gap between research and practice?

PB: I think we should not try to close the gap, but we rather should allow people to enter the gap. People should enter these spaces temporarily and come out again and deepen the thinking in their own space. I do not want the world to be without these gaps or to be fully interdisciplinary. However, I think entering the gap in between research and practice is essential for solving the big problems of our times.

GS: Thank you so much for this very inspirational interview, Tima!





by Lauren McCarthy
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Communicating Across Sectors: Why Now, More than Ever, We Need to Get it Right

An Interview with Stephen Khan, Editor of The Conversation, UK.

The *Conversation* is an independent source of news and views, translating research and analysis into short, accessible articles and delivering them directly to the public. As those of us who work in, or research cross-sector partnerships know, translation is very important when it comes to working across sectors and sometimes across different worldviews. For a taster of relevant articles available through The Conversation, how about trying ***The UN can save itself by working effectively with outside partners, What businesses taking a stand against Donald Trump can learn from NGOs, and Communicating climate change: Focus on the framing, not just the facts.*** These examples also offer good examples of how complex terms and ideas can be translated into bitesize pieces, easily read by all.

I interviewed Stephen Khan, Editor of The Conversation UK to get an overview of the project, and advice on communicating across audiences.



Image: Stephen Khan

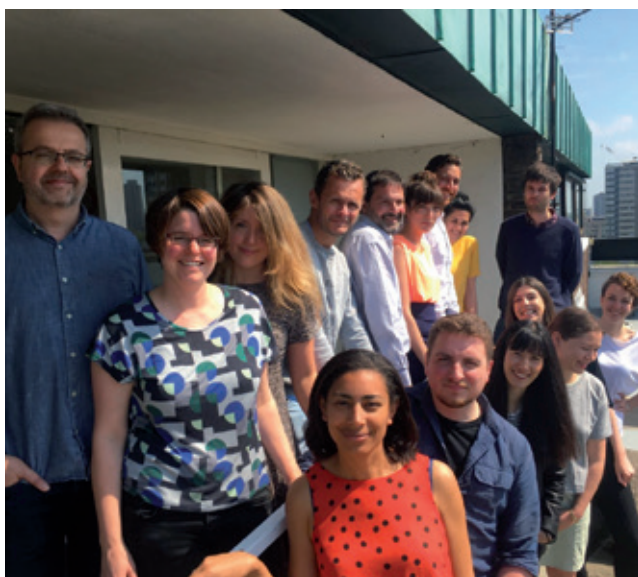
THE CONVERSATION

Lauren McCarthy (LM): Could you tell us what *The Conversation* is, and how you got into your current role as Editor?

Stephen Khan (SK): I've worked as a correspondent, and editor, at a number of titles, including *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer* and going back some way, Scottish newspapers. Throughout my career I had concerns about where knowledge was coming from and how it was being channelled to the general public. That's not to be critical of the organisations that I worked for – merely a consideration regarding the fact that my life and career coincided with the decline of the newspaper industry. Each year newspapers would have shrinking staff numbers, and inevitably the people they were tending to

We hear about “a post-truth environment”, and in many senses that's what we set out to challenge.

get rid of were people who'd spent long periods of time focusing on certain issues; pertaining to education, the environment, sciences – things that involved a degree of specialist knowledge. I began wondering, if the number of established respectable outlets where people get their information from is shrinking, what happens in the future? A lot of these organisations HAVE survived, but it's not



always the same product. For instance, 15 years ago you may have had five science editors, and now you have one.

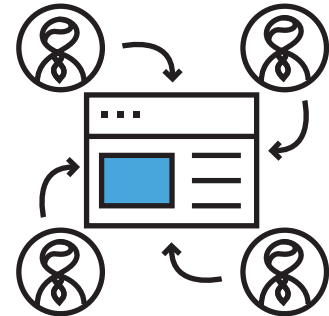
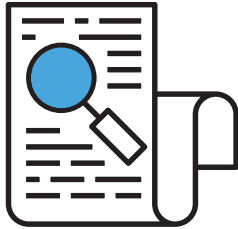
So in 2011 I became aware of a project called *The Conversation* in Australia. It was tapping into academic knowledge and using journalists to collaborate on articles which were then published direct to the public. So I started to have conversations with them about launching a version in Europe. We started *The Conversation* in London in May 2013. By the end of 2013 we had grown to be a start-up group of 20 universities, and the group of editors was at 6 or 7. Now almost 4 years on we have 71 universities in our membership and 21 editors, and we have between 12 and 15 million views of our content every month on a whole range of platforms – from *The Washington Post*, to *The Guardian*, to *Scientific American*, to *El Pais* – pretty much every mainstream international publication you can think of.

LM: So do you think your initial aims have remained the same, or have they even become stronger given the political environment we now find ourselves in?

SK: It feels successful, but it feels as if we still have a long way to go. It's precarious in that we're suddenly in a world, which, in one sense we warned about. Where all truth can be questioned and where facts are constantly doubted. We hear about “a post-truth environment”, and in many senses that's what we set out to challenge. We didn't quite expect it to emerge in quite such a dramatic and sudden way – but we did fear the fraying of established narratives – trusted narratives – and felt there was an urgency to create something that could be a bastion of truth and respectability that the general public could read and have faith in. It's got a sense of mission about it, this project. The people who work here have a deep belief in its importance and share those aims and concerns.

LM: What role does *The Conversation* play for us researchers and academics?

SK: It's always been clear to us that academia has a significant role here, and could be deployed in a way that perhaps we – and many people in academia – weren't aware of. I think *The Conversation* helps bring about a heightened awareness of the value and strength – particularly in the UK, but in other countries, too – of the Higher



Education sector and the contribution it makes to society. And the investment that society makes in it, and the mutual benefit that can be gleaned by unlocking some of these big pools of knowledge. The feedback we get from our readership – more than 80% of which is outside of academia – is that its broadened their minds and interests. I think that's good for society – for a democratic and healthy population.

LM: In terms of translating stories across audiences, do you have any tips?

SK: The tips that I would share with academics, or anyone really, is to have a great story to tell. Many are engaged in fascinating research that will touch upon issues that are compelling, intriguing, and interesting, and in conveying that message you really must imagine you are talking to someone in a café about it. Imagine you are passing on the wealth of your wisdom to someone who just happens to be standing there, ordering a flat white. The simple thing to think is what is it about your area of research that is applicable and of interest to the wider public?

Tips for Communicating Across Audiences

- Tell a compelling story.
- Ask, what is it about my work which is relevant to the person in front of me?
- Use clear and basic terms.
- Use examples to illustrate your idea.
- Don't assume much prior knowledge
- Polish the text – well-written pieces are more likely to be read all the way through.

LM: For me the challenge is how to communicate as if you are in a café, but at the same time maintain some of the nuance of the issues you are talking about. That's a skill to develop.

SK: I think you're right, and we as a group of journalists help academics with that. It's fundamental to the strength of this proposition that we convey academics' ideas and knowledge, but we do so in a way that's compelling, but also absolutely true to what the academic wants to say. We are not in the business of spin.

LM: What are the most common mistakes that writers make when they're trying to communicate across different audiences?

SK: I have to say that on the whole I have been positively encouraged by the quality of work we receive. Even when that hasn't been the case, the capacity of people to learn quickly has been enormous. Many have gone from writing things in quite complex ways that are sometimes quite difficult to penetrate, but have quickly become adept at communicating in this style.

If you're reaching outside of your community, you have to speak in clear terms, you mustn't assume any knowledge.

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To answer your question directly, I'd say the one mistake academics can still make is that there is a tendency to assume too much knowledge. They've got to tell themselves that the person who they are reaching out to, the potential audience, probably doesn't know anything about their area of expertise. So start with very basic terms and questions: why is my knowledge relevant to this news event? Why is my research significant to your life?

I think the skills we pass on are transferable. They're useful for other environments; for other areas. We can help people become more accessible writers, better communicators in general and that can help with academic writing projects as well. As a community we also go out and work with academics and run training sessions with our member universities. This isn't just a website, or an outlet, it's a process. Publishing on a website is just part of that.

Learning the communication skills needed to frame, translate and speak to different groups is crucial for those working in CSSP roles, and for teachers and lecturers in the field.

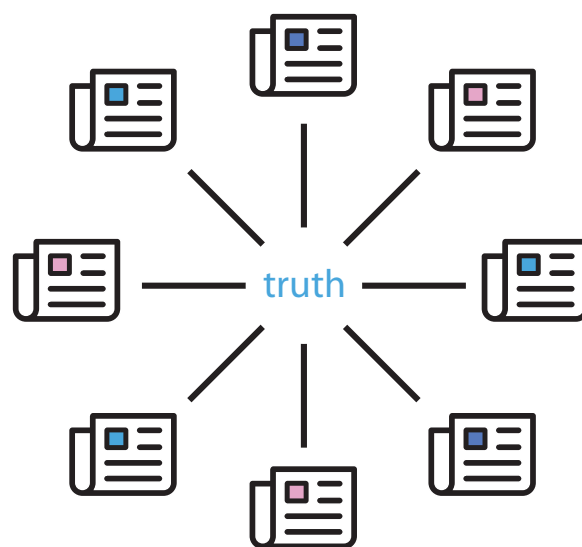
LM: So as our readership is one which works on partnerships between business, NGOs, academics, the public sector, and others, do you have any final thoughts on how best to communicate across those very different approaches?

SK: It comes back again to this idea of, if you're reaching outside of your community, you have to speak in clear terms, you mustn't assume any knowledge. But also you have to tell a story – think of examples, think of things that will illustrate the strength of what it is you do. If you can start with a colourful example of what it is that's been achieved, or someone who has benefited from your work that will always been more readable.

Recently a senior academic manager, at one of our member universities, cut through this beautifully by saying that the reliable bastions of information that once dominated the public sphere have fragmented, and what we need now are sensible ways to differentiate between an approximation of the truth, and utter drivel. I thought that was a great way of putting it – that's exactly what we need. We need as many sensible, reliable outlets clustered around truth, or clustered around versions of the truth, that pull people away from total madness, and blatant lies that exist elsewhere. A way in which we can help with that process is by doing it in a compelling way, and a well-written way, because those who want to do the opposite, and spread lies, will do so skilfully – so we have to be as well equipped for battle.

LM: The Conversation represents one of the rallying cries for new means of transferring reliable information across borders and sectors. Learning the communication skills needed to frame, translate and speak to different groups is crucial for those working in CSSP roles, and for teachers and lecturers in the field.

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by Matthew Taylor
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Think Like a System, Act Like an Entrepreneur

The mission of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) is to enrich society through ideas and action. Born in the Enlightenment, we are a 263 year old charitable organisation comprised of a 28,000-strong global Fellowship, a multi-disciplinary research team, a public lectures programme and online platform that has had over 100 million views in the last five years. It is this breadth of activity and our convening power that enables us to partner with governments, businesses and public institutions around the world to go beyond the limits of a traditional think tank and to support enduring social change.

Think tanks have traditionally applied the logic that the pragmatic development of policy options sets a clear path to progress. This is the “policy presumption” among ministers, civil servants and policy advisors that the most effective way to accomplish social change is to pull the big levers of central Government policy; legislation, tax and spend and earmarked funding streams. This is increasingly becoming out of touch with the complex and networked world we live in. Indeed it is perhaps this narrowness and path dependency that often makes policy unsuccessful.

At the RSA, we recognise that to alter the course of our modern society, we need to more fully understand systems. In this article, we will explore an emerging RSA concept that we are calling: ‘think like a system, act like an entrepreneur’, which at its simplest is an approach to seeing the wider system and identifying and testing the optimal ways to make change happen. Its uniqueness is in the combination of insights from cultural theory, design thinking, and the RSA’s range of research and engagement methods.

Complex Problems and Turbulent Times

We live in disorienting and challenging times. As society becomes more networked, the traditional centralised power of governments is under pressure. ‘Old power’, characterised by formal, linear, definitive modes where failure is catastrophic is being replaced by new modes that are tech-enabled, iterative, divergent, and see failure as a way of learning. However, it would be overly simplistic to suggest that this is a clear shift from a power construct of the hierarchy to one of the network. We are still some way away from self-governing systems.

In our work with government agencies, and public and private institutions, we seek to bring the hierarchy and the

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network together: allowing for participation in place of control, but applying clear decision-making where needed. This shift is illustrated in Greenhalgh’s analysis of how the combination of old and new power modes can enable change (see diagram¹).

We do not start with a defined problem, but rather uncover the wider nature of a problem through research and dialogue – recognising that no one has a complete map of the forces at play in any given situation, but together we can explore and experiment to build a bigger picture.

Convening for Change

As old power paradigms dissipate, institutions are realising that complex social issues cannot be tackled by sin-

One of the most widely accepted descriptions of design thinking is the Double Diamond model (developed by *the Design Council*): this is a methodology in which a



¹ Adapted from Greenhalgh, T., Robert, G., Macfarlane, F., Bate, P. and Kyriakidou, O. (2004) Diffusion of innovations in service organizations: systematic review and recommendations. *The Milbank Quarterly*; 82(4):581-629.

gle organisations alone. As one local authority rep said: “If you look at the projections for the next few years I don’t think there is any other way than working as a system.” But many large scale change programmes still falter due to an institutional inability to deliver cross-sector coordination.

problem is explored by first opening up a range of issues and perspectives, prior to converging on a clear problem statement. The process of divergence and convergence is then repeated in the second diamond, where ideas are prototyped, before selecting an intervention or initiative.

A common misjudgement is to assume that just by bringing stakeholders together, collaborative problem-solving will ensue. This is the utopian idea of ‘joined up government’ which rarely makes the transition from the stakeholder roundtable to joint working. The process by which a group will work together is seldom examined, but it is ultimately the relational dynamics that foster (or foil) a collective commitment to change.

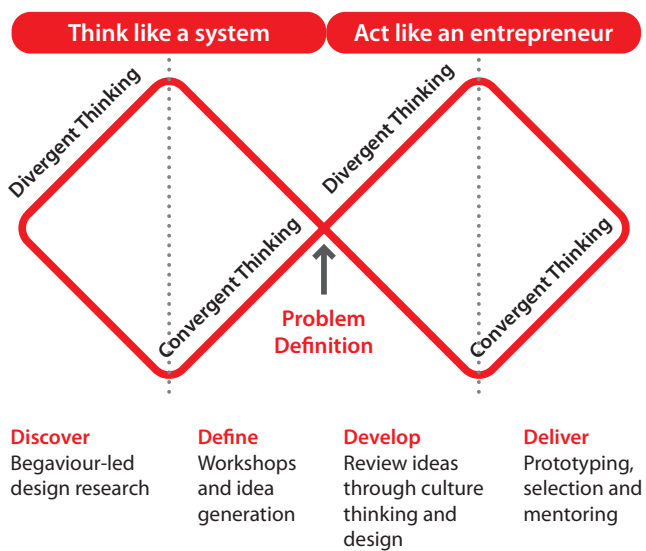
Thinking like a System

We begin change programmes by convening design workshops with a range of participants to produce a system map. This starts with user research (which could include ethnographies or social network analysis) and data insights drawn from multiple structured and unstructured sources (which might include public datasets such as public health or census data, or sentiment analysis from social media). With this research we can dive deeper and ask probing questions: What kind of problem is it? Is it simple, complicated or wicked? Are there competing priorities? What are the dependencies between stakeholders? Who influences the system? Which resources can be mobilised? What are the repeating problems? What will impede success?

At the RSA, we use our convening power to engage cross sector actors with the intention of creating enduring partnerships for change. We draw together those who are affected by a complex societal problem to help them understand the problem in a systemic way, and facilitate the co-design of change initiatives to address it. To do this, we use a design thinking logic that is highly iterative.

To understand power dynamics we apply a cultural theory lens to the system map. Cultural theory is a means of understanding the sources of energy, motivation and power within social systems and the individuals that comprise them. This divides the social system into four domains: hierarchy, community, individualism and fatalism. A hierarchical perspective puts emphasis on leadership, strategy and expertise as the way to coordinate human activity. The community view, however, emphasises sol-

At this stage, however, it is important not to fall into the trap of overdesigning the perfect conditions to balance all four areas. It is more useful to see social systems as a dynamic interplay that is in continuous flux. Power dynamics lie in the competing incentives and motivations driving individual actors to make decisions. A social system will be most functional when incentives or motivations are aligned, but opportunities for change arise in even the most dysfunctional of systems.

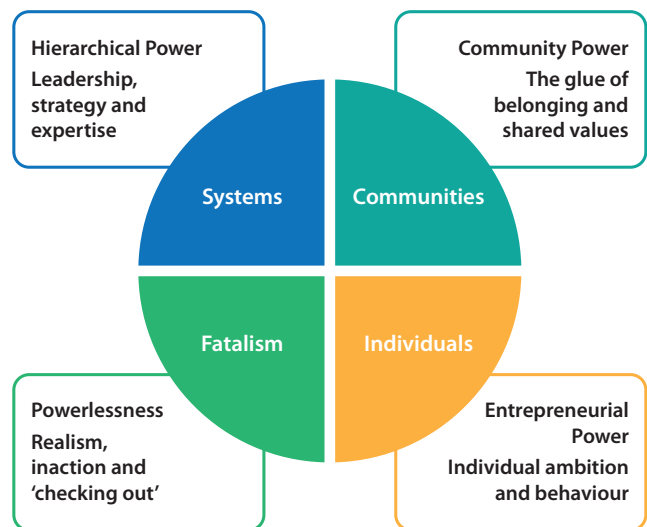


Seeing: Through a Cultural theory lens: hierarchy, solidarity, individual, fatalist. Where is the motivation, energy, equilibrium in the system? Systems mapping will help us identify the imbalances.

Doing: Identify actions to bring the equilibrium back into balance. This presents the greatest opportunity for lasting change. Social moments represent opportunities for maximum leverage in the implementation.

idity – the glue of belonging and shared values. The individualistic view sees change as largely spontaneously driven by individual ambition and competitive endeavour. The fatalistic view sees social change efforts, variously, as intractable, unlikely to deliver intended outcomes or irrelevant to the things that make it hardest to be human.

Applying this as an analytical frame forces participants to examine the politics and culture around a problem and identify the blocks and enablers of any potential change. This makes designing solutions from a singular perspective – say a one off entrepreneurial solution – challenging, as the inevitable kick back from authority, community and individuals will be simulated during the process.



Acting like an Entrepreneur

System mapping provides the big picture, from which the group then seeks to draw out the best opportunities for change. It is at this point that we mimic the habits of entrepreneurs, looking to spot where there is hunger for change and take action. It is important to note that this is a very fast-moving process, where partners seek out the “social moments” where change efforts might get the greatest traction, such as around upcoming political events or changes in administration. Chaotic trigger events like a riot or protest also provide fertile territory for change, so it is important not to underestimate the platform for change that crises provide. Opportunism is key, because if there is a critique of systems thinking it is that in its quest to understand complexity it gets stuck in theory.

Having clearly defined the problem through the systems mapping process, partners can then identify routes to change. Testing in a live small scale environment or through scenario modelling in real time, partners can rapidly develop interventions. In these experiments we

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continuously seek feedback and iterate the prototypes to assess if they are helping or hindering change.

We have most recently been using this framework as a partner with NHS England on a programme entitled “Health as a Social Movement”. This aims to grow the impact of social movements by working with teams who are developing new ways to support and deliver healthcare in communities across the country. For this project we are convening institutional stakeholders with community health workers and voluntary sector partners from a wide array of community-driven health projects, and supporting them to develop, test and spread social movements that aim to improve health and care outcomes.

An example of one of the change initiatives is a community health action group that formed during a protest against the temporary closure of the local community hospital in South Cumbria. The hospital had closed due to lack of staff and an 18-month campaign to hire replacement GPs had failed to attract a single candidate. In response to the protest, the local NHS team invited the protest group to help with the recruitment effort. The resulting Millom Health Action group produced a recruitment video, which attracted 5,000 views a week and successfully recruited three GPs. An NHS partnership formed called Better Care Together, and is now working with the group to use new technologies as well as creative community-led endeavours such as support groups, and volunteering initiatives to deliver more services and information where people are. The RSA is now working with this group, among others, to use the systems mapping and co-design process to identify entrepreneurial ways to scale and spread the impact of their efforts. By looking critically at the work to date and setting goals for change by the end of the programme, we are supporting the group to co-design new ways to think about commissioning and prototype initiatives that could lead to real reductions on system pressures.

Making Change Happen in a Complex World

At the RSA, we believe that when we think about the pursuit of progressive social change, we should care as much about how we achieve that change as about the goals we pursue. Making change in systems as complex as public health may seem insurmountable. Indeed attempts to do so at scale are where some of the greatest failings in

policy have played out in the past. By applying the ‘think like a system, act like an entrepreneur’ mindset, we do not attempt to take on grand societal challenges in their entirety, instead we look to identify nimble opportunities for change within the system, test prototypes and support successful efforts to grow and influence other parts of the wider system.

We see that tackling social change is an ongoing, collaborative, iterative process, and one that does not proceed in a linear fashion with a clear start and end point. We can no longer hope to end a change process with one perfect policy solution or achieve salvation in a single start-up. Policy is of course part of the change process and entrepreneurs will always bring fresh ideas, but positive social change really occurs when these are parts of a bigger shift. As the late systems thinker Donella Meadows once said:

“I don’t think there are cheap tickets to system change. You have to work at it, whether that means rigorously analysing a system or rigorously casting off paradigms. In the end, it seems that leverage has less to do with pushing levers than it does with disciplined thinking combined with strategically, profoundly, madly letting go.”

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Rescuing the Collaborative Paradigm from its Supporters?

The Many Challenges of Reaching Paradigm Status

When science historian Thomas Kuhn¹ provided the most popular and contemporary definition of paradigms as “universally recognized scientific achievements that, for a time, provide model problems and solutions for a community of researchers”, he actually laid the foundation for a more controversial use of the concept of a paradigm, as ‘a solution in search of a problem’. What James Austin in 2000 dubbed the ‘collaboration challenge’² quite quickly became known as the ‘partnering paradigm’ after it was embraced by thousands of governments, international organizations, companies and NGOs over the next decade. Roundtables, coalitions, platforms, public-private partnerships... all have been introduced as solutions for complex problems for which individual sectors and actors are unable to devise adequate approaches. With the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, partnering has reached institutional status as one of the five founding principles for increased impact (see diagram). Partnering serves as the linking pin between the



four other founding principles (Peace, Prosperity, People, Planet) ultimately serving the 17 interconnected SDG aims to be reached by 2030. Can partnering live up to its paradigmatic status? Should it? And how can we learn from partnering practice to enhance its effectiveness, assuming it has such paradigmatic status with many of its early adopters?

It is precisely because of this assumed status that partnership practice and research has also been criticized, by cynics who never ‘believed’ in the paradigm in the first place, but also by serious scholars, who are supportive of the trend, but critical of the way it is playing out at the moment. The critique follows a number of lines of argumentation. First, partnering is criticized for not adequately – or measurably – addressing the manifold problems for which it is introduced. A second form of critique includes: sub-optimal partnering configurations³; not addressing the actual complexity of the problem⁴; a too dominant private sector⁵; too limited ambitions; non-optimal issue-partner fits⁶; and over-ambition that creates all sorts of ‘collaborative complexities’⁷. Thirdly, ill-conceived partnerships have been criticized for undermining the legitimacy of the whole phenomenon⁸, for instance owing to

How can we learn from partnering practice to enhance its effectiveness, assuming it has such paradigmatic status with many of its early adopters?

overly optimistic or superficial claims, subdued responsibilities, or poor governance structures⁹.

In response, many have reiterated that collaboration does not come easily, hence success cannot be assured¹⁰ and partnerships cannot be considered a panacea for development problems¹¹. The effectiveness of partnering is highly context dependent and susceptible to change. Building up partnering experience requires a learning approach that in turn requires an open attitude on the part of practitioners. However, here the paradigmatic status becomes a burden. Practitioners may not wish to open up their activities to research, learn from ‘failure’, or may only be interested in ‘evidence-based’ experiences, in a more strict (controlled trial) type of research. The staunchest supporters of the partnering paradigm can be held partly responsible for this. They are not necessarily interested in understanding the complexities of the partnering process and/or contributing to more adequate research approaches, so as to define, document and follow failure as well as success. The ‘performance’ school of impact

measurement, that is inclined to focus on gains without looking at indirect or longer-term effects, can be seen as supporting this trend¹².

The partnership phenomenon, as well as research on (cross-sector) partnering, consequently suffers a comparable fate to the research on strategic alliances. This latter stream of research has closely followed waves of high profile mergers and acquisitions since the late 20th century. The study of strategic alliances/partnerships is much more established and has the benefit of longer-term hindsight and an easier benchmark of success and failure (profit/loss account for the involved companies). Studies arrived at very critical assessments of the logic and impact of strategic partnerships, with failure rates of 60% or more. Even the causes for this finding are known¹³: (1) lack of shared vision; (2) over- or under-investing; (3) poor governance; (4) lack of trust-building; (5) lack of adaptability. But the research has nevertheless not contributed much to improved alliance practice. The dismal practice repeats itself and the failure rate has hardly diminished. Research findings have barely registered with practitioners. The most critical researchers of strategic alliances were often disconnected from the actual practice of alliances.

If we take the parallel with what happened with strategic alliances seriously, we actually face a paradigm that has to be “rescued” from its – perhaps most articulate – supporters. Consequently many partnering arrangements run the risk of falling short of meeting needs, expectations and hoped-for goals. It remains difficult to document and learn from what *has not worked* to date and to focus on working more imaginatively, efficiently and effectively together. The knowledge about the current quality, practices and impact of partnering is fragmented, relatively superficial and most often not easily accessible to those working on the partnering frontline. There are few ‘safe spaces’ offering opportunities to learn from others’ experience or to seek support when things are not going according to plan. As a result, all too often partnering mistakes are repeated, resources wasted and targets are not met.

So, back to the drawing board of partnering research? Throw away initiatives? Or something else? My take on this is the latter: something else. In particular the answer to the failure of strategic alliances lies not in the critical approach to them – we know most of the sources of their failure

If we take the parallel with what happened with strategic alliances seriously, we actually face a paradigm that has to be “rescued” from its – perhaps most articulate - supporters.

– but in the poor management of the interface between practitioners and researchers, i.e. the science-policy interface. Strategic alliance scholars were often too late with their insights, applied inappropriate techniques or models (for instance abstracting from the political context or not taking the often ‘bounded rational’ mindset of corporate leaders into account) and operated too distantly from practitioners, without access to internal processes and/or without recognition of their relevance by practitioners. In order to learn from this experience, we need to redraw the science-policy interface, to reappraise (and perhaps rescue?) the partnering paradigm.

The Partnering Paradigm Reframed

Such a reappraisal starts with a correct understanding of the antecedents of partnering. There are good reasons to consider cross-sector partnering appropriate under the following conditions:

- > Partnerships are not a luxury but a necessity for addressing particularly ‘wicked’, systemic or complex challenges that exceed the capabilities and responsibilities of single sectors;
- > Partnerships have the potential to create new solutions to existing problems, rather than compromises;
- > Partnerships can build upon the pooled and complementary strengths of each sector
- > Each sector requires opportunities to keep investing in its own strength and core capabilities;
- > Although partnerships obviously are a means to an end, initially they can be considered as an end in themselves (for instance, by allying parties can reach a common understanding of a problem and/or reach goal alignment);
- > Partnerships are not a panacea for all sustainable

development problems: there exists a continuum of ‘multi-stakeholder’ approaches, linked to various degrees of complexity, that require various forms of coalitions - no one size fits all;

- > The risk of crowding out other important stakeholders looms large, so impact assessments become a vital part of any partnership dynamic – for participants as well as evaluators.

Ten Requirements for Effective Partnering

In 2015, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as vice-chair of the Global Partnership of Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), asked a combined group of five reputable international partnering organizations to pool their existing knowledge and hands-on experience, to identify what it takes to raise the bar of partnership performance. They included: the Partnership Brokers Association (PBA), Partnerships in Practice (PIP), the Collective Leadership Institute (CLI), The Partnering Initiative (TPI) and the Partnerships Resource Centre (PrC). They created the **Promoting Effective Partnering** (PEP) initiative.



These organizations agreed that there are no quick partnering fixes and that one collaboration model does not fit all. A further shared assessment was that a large number of existing ‘partnerships’ might not really qualify as partnerships, while many partnerships were underperforming. The urgency of this realization becomes clear if we understand that the ‘window’ of relevant partnering opportunity, when many organizations are willing to spend time and effort, might only remain open for a limited number of years and only if partnerships can deliver. The inclination to shy away from critical studies on partnerships then

The challenge is not necessarily that partnering will lose its popularity, but rather that the bar for partnering is set too low.

looms large.

In short: the challenge is not necessarily that partnering will lose its popularity, but rather that the bar for partnering is set too low, which implies that partnering will lose its effectiveness and prove the cynics right. Partnerships can only make transformational change happen if core success factors are taken into account. Rather than set a standard for partnering, however, the five organizations agreed upon 10 requirements for “raising the bar for effective partnering” in support of the SDGs.

Effective partnering requires practitioners and researchers to:

1. **Break through** assumptions and preconceptions about each other;
2. **Recognise and relish diversity** as an asset rather than a problem;
3. **Properly value the many different contributions** each partner brings;
4. **Develop new skills** in partnership-building, collaboration brokering and collective leadership;
5. **Understand the systems and contexts** in which partnerships operate;
6. **Apply the highest standards**, rigour and accountability to all partnering endeavours;
7. **Invest in the partnering process** in order to optimise engagement and create the conditions for efficiency, innovation and sustainability;
8. **Learn** and be prepared to change course on the basis of growing insights;
9. **Be modest** in understanding their own limitations and abilities to develop sustainable approaches;
10. **Keep their eyes on the ball:** partnering is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Taking these requirements into account should help to rescue the partnering process from those supporters that have an unrealistic, overly optimistic or simplistic ‘belief’ in the partnering approach – i.e. possibly its staunchest supporters? The PEP approach is consequently not prescriptive. Rather it invites partners to question their own approaches, in order to determine what changes may be required to become more effective. This implies in particular: promoting greater clarity and coherence in the partnering discourse; providing better access to knowledge; creating a dynamic platform for learning and exchange for practitioners and policy makers, in a sufficiently safe space for

experimentation and innovation, to enable more effective partnering and the achievement of scale and impact; and

The PEP approach invites partners to question their own approaches, in order to determine what changes may be required to become more effective.

offering access to a range of tailored support services.

The PEP Approach: 17 Factors for 17 SDGs

The most tangible result of this effort has become the PEP platform. It was launched at the Nairobi GPEDC ministerial meeting, in December 2016. In a process of bottom-up interaction with a number of stakeholders around the world, five generic areas and 17 sub-factors were identified that more or less cover all aspects of partnering processes. They can also be linked to consecutive phases of the partnering cycle. Nowhere on the PEP platform is there a claim of ‘best practice’ or well-defined steps for partnering. Wherever possible, the platform provides ‘navigation tools’ and ‘guiding questions’ (guiding heuristics) to help practitioners acquire the relevant knowledge.

The PEP platform is intended to connect practitioners with relevant researchers to create communities around critical areas of action research. One lesson learned from the strategic alliance research is also that research should be timely, critical and constructive. The website, as well as the community, is work in progress. The table shows a first personal assessment of the state of research in each of these areas (compare this to recent overviews by Branzei & Le Ber¹⁴ and Gray and Stites¹⁵). On the basis of this assessment, we should conclude that there is no area of partnering research that can claim to present solid results. But there are many promising pockets of research. You are invited to contribute – or, of course, to disagree with my assessment!

5 Generic Factors	17 Sub-factors	State of research*		
		weak	modest	solid
1. Context, reach and impact	Systemic change	■		
	Risk mitigation		■	
	Ownership	■		
	scaling	■		
2. Strategy and partnership development	Partner-issue fit	■		
	Diversity & complementarity	■	■	
	Mutual benefits & aligned purpose		■	
	Results orientation		■	
3. Collaboration and Communication	Mutual engagement	■	■	
	Capacity development		■	
	Trust, power relationships		■	
4. Governance and resourcing	Inclusive & transparent decision making	■	■	
	Partnership management		■	
	Sustainable business case	■	■	
5. Learning	Monitoring		■	
	Evaluation	■	■	
	Moving-on-strategy	■		

*personal assessment

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Collective Action and Social Partnership in Global Supply Chains:

Lessons from the Bangladesh Accord

Introduction

On 23 April 2013, the Rana Plaza building complex collapsed claiming the lives of over 1,100, mainly women, ready-made garment workers, and injuring many more. This was just the latest in a series of fatal factory fires and collapses which killed hundreds of garment workers in Bangladesh, many despite being audited against international accountability standards including some of those in the Rana Plaza complex. The collapse also demonstrates the failure of prevailing business practice to deal with labour issues in global supply chain based on social auditing of factory compliance against accountability standards and codes of conducts.



Structural re-enforcements in an Accord factory building

In this thought piece, we examine how collective governance built upon the principles of social partnership can help to overcome collective action problems inherent in prevailing practice that emphasises individual actions. A collective action dilemma describes a situation where the action of individuals leads to lack of investment or resources being overexploited as in the “tragedy of the commons” unless an external authority, typically, the government intervenes to regulate access¹. Elinor Ostrom suggested an alternative, polycentric system of governance, in which formally independent centres of authority interact to make allocation, regulation, and sanctioning decisions². In such a system, private actors can avoid the tragedy of the commons if certain design principles are followed. Applied to labour standards in global supply chains, the question to be addressed is how can actors design polycentric institutional arrangements that avoid free-riding while providing sustainable governance in the interest of intended beneficiaries, that is workers?

The argument developed here is that by understanding worker safety as a collective action problem, and by drawing on social partnership as understood in industrial relations, building a more robust approach to global labour governance can be achieved. We illustrate our arguments by examining a key response to the Rana Plaza tragedy, the Bangladesh Accord for Building and Fire Safety (Accord)³, which contains wider lessons for labour rights in global supply chains.

Worker Safety as a Collective Action Problem

Factory safety is a collective action dilemma nested at multiple levels with competing interests, which, in combination place downwards pressures on labour standards.

At the brand level, even though safe and sustainable factories carry collective benefit for the entire industry, buyers face individual disadvantage when pursuing costly sustainable actions, as such costs may not be borne by competitors. Brands are competing against each other on a low cost model, and competitors may benefit from safety upgrades that another firm has made. Without assurances that all buyers invest in safe and sustainable factories, it is difficult to convince individual buyers to take action due to the risk of free riding.

At the supplier level, a collective approach to lift standards potentially could increase the income of the industry and workers at a relatively low marginal cost to buyers. Instead, competition between factories both from within the country and from abroad is cutthroat due to low entry barriers. Suppliers compete with each other on a cost-basis, and push downwards pressure on workers in terms of wages and safety regimes.

At the worker level, as long as an unlimited supply of labour is ready to take up work in garment sector, workers lack market power to demand safer workplaces. Efforts at developing a collective voice in the form of trade unions face strong resistance from employers, and often government officials alike. As a result, out of over 4,500 officially registered garment factories in Bangladesh, only about 10% have registered unions. But according to local estimates, many fewer are functioning properly due to the immature system of industrial relations, fragmentation of unions and lack of organising capacities.

At the supply chain level, highly complex global webs of purchasing relationships involve multiple buyers sourcing from multiple suppliers with parties spreading their relationships across geographical spaces to minimise risk. The combined effect has been increasing fragmentation, multiple tiers involving sub-contracting and an overall lack of transparency. Fragmentation has produced a situation where, in the absence of state oversight, brands have not taken responsibility for labour standards within the factories that produce the goods which they sell.

Social auditing creates a collective action dilemma of its own. Even in cases of major non-compliances, there is little follow-up by buyers, and contracts are rarely terminated. The result is corporate complicity in a system where multiple buyers re-monitor the non-compliances of their supplying factories.

At the host government level, competition among sourcing destinations for low cost production drives down standards and wages. Bangladesh is the world's second-largest exporter of ready-made garments, but it faces increasing competition from neighbouring Myanmar as well as Cambodia and Laos and increasingly East Africa. The Bangladeshi government resists effective regulation out of fear that compliance will increase production costs, and decrease the competitiveness of this sector that makes up 80% of exports in a highly competitive, and mobile global market.



A trade union meeting in Dhaka

Failure of Individual Action

Single brands have neither the willingness, incentive nor leverage to make individual mechanisms work, as the failure of social auditing demonstrates. Wary of exposure to negative publicity by mainly Western NGOs, labour activists and unions, brands have heavily invested in social auditing of factory compliance, which accounts for up to 80% of their ethical sourcing budget⁴. Yet while social auditing has helped companies manage their supply chains, safeguard individual reputation and claim social responsibility, it has largely failed to improve working conditions. Shortcomings have been tragically demonstrated by the failure to prevent a series of fatal industrial accidents. Rana Plaza famously housed two factories, Phantom Apparels and New Wave Style, that were audited against the Business Social Compliance Initiative's (BSCI) standard.

Critics have long argued that social auditing is primarily designed to limit buyers' legal liability and to manage reputational risk, rather than improving working conditions⁵. In theory, the threat of sanctions – withdrawal of orders – encourages suppliers to address non-compliances. In practice, social auditing creates a collective action dilemma of its own. Even in cases of major non-compliances, there is little follow-up by buyers, and contracts are rarely terminated, not least because this would create disruption to the supply chain. This renders the threat of an individual buyer withdrawing orders ineffective. In turn, the knowledge that individual action is likely to make little difference reinforces a buyer's incentives to keep "eyes wide shut" even if suppliers are found non-compliant with a company's code of conduct. Companies and their suppliers then both have an interest in hiding labour violations rather than reporting them. The result is corporate complicity in a system where multiple buyers re-monitor the non-compliances of their supplying factories, leading to duplication of audits and 'audit fatigue', yet without significant remediation taking place.

Social Partnership as Collective Action

Scholars agree that solving complex governance challenges in global supply chains requires collaborative approaches, as no single organization can do it alone. As will be developed below, the response to the Rana Plaza disaster has seen the emergence of a social partnership-type arrangement to try to address these institutional failures. The concept of "social partnership" established amongst

practitioners in the European social partnership system, and academics from the field of industrial relations is useful to understand how a higher degree of consensus can be achieved to help users themselves overcome collective action problems⁶. While originally referring to national tripartite institutions, as mirrored in the structure of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), we suggest that the concept of social partnership can also help to understand voluntary collective action in transnational contexts.

Social partnership is essentially about adopting a collective approach to solving problems, involving a double dynamic of:

- > **Multiple interest coalition:** Through forming a social partnership, different parties can cooperate and build a consensus through which problems can be solved, even if their individual interests compete or the definition of the problem differ. Mutuality is built upon the recognition that, at times, the interests of the parties involved, typically workers and managers/owners, may not be shared but that a common solution can create mutual benefit despite divergent interests⁷. In global supply chains, a collective mechanism to address labour rights violations can benefit both buyers seeking to avoid reputational damage, as well as worker representatives seeking to develop safe workplaces.
- > **Industry-wide, pre-competitive collaboration:** Tragedies such as Rana Plaza have demonstrated that an industry's reputation is a shared resource, subject to reputational spillovers⁸. One incident can damage the reputation of an entire industry beyond the firms

Viewing governance as a collective action problem helps improve our understanding of the complex institutional arrangements that can contribute to collective governance within complex global supply chains.

directly involved. Moreover, addressing root causes requires industry-wide collaboration. Encompassing interest groups thus need to collaborate to achieve collective action and sanction free-riding. Many brands now accept the need for pre-competitive collaboration as a way of removing from competition issues of collective concern, such as labour rights. When acting collectively to address systemic problems in an industry's global supply chain, global buyers can avoid competing on safety and achieve greater leverage. Collective action then spreads the cost of economic adjustment, increases sanctioning capability and reduces the incentives for free riding.

In the next section, we outlined how these dynamics have been harnessed to build an innovative system of supply chain labour governance based on principles of social partnership.

The Bangladesh Accord for Building and Fire Safety as Social Partnership

The *Accord* was signed in the immediate aftermath of the Rana Plaza building collapse in 2013 to develop a more robust approach to worker safety in the Bangladesh ready-made garment industry. The Accord grew out of an earlier attempt to create a "Memorandum of Understanding", which never came into force as only two brands, P&G and Tchibo, had signed up⁹. It was only after Rana Plaza that a number of labour actors including the Global Union Federations, IndustriALL Global Union and UNI Global Union, as well as the labour rights NGOs Clean Clothes Campaign and Workers Rights Consortium were able to pressure a critical mass of brands into signing up to this five-year, legally binding agreement between brands and

unions that is unprecedented in global supply chain governance. The Accord is chaired by the ILO, and has been signed by 215 signatory companies (as of 2017), global and local unions, with labour rights NGOs as witness signatories. Signatory companies include global brands such as H&M, Inditex, C&A, Primark and Hugo Boss, large Western retailers such as Aldi, Carrefour or Tesco as well as a number of smaller apparel brands. The Accord illustrates how a collective and collaborative approach by brands and unions can generate leverage to change the system through collective action. Six dimensions rooted in the social partnership approach help to establish the institutional conditions for effective private governance.

- 1. Transnational co-determination:** Central to the Accord is recognition that worker representatives, and not just representatives of capital, must be included in the design and oversight of transnational labour governance regimes. The Accord Steering Committee consists of equal representation of trade union and company representatives. Rather than promoting common business interests in protecting reputation¹⁰, inclusion of recognised labour representatives means representation of interests of the agreement's intended beneficiaries: garment workers.
- 2. Developing worker voice:** Worker voice is central to a partnership approach as it recognises the potentially competing interests of management and workers over core organisational issues¹¹. As such, the Accord oversees the development of a more comprehensive structure of worker voice in the area of workplace safety, including joint worker-management safety committees in all factories, and a robust complaints mechanism.



REFLECTIONS ON THEORY-PRACTICE

3. **Leverage through collective action:** Collective action by a large proportion of buyers provides far greater leverage for effective sanctioning than any buyer would have individually. As expressed by a buying brand: “If you don’t remediate you lose your orders from 215 brands. That’s leverage, that’s how you get things done in Bangladesh.” Under Accord rules, when a factory is found unsafe, no signatory brand may source from this factory. Facing the loss of orders from not just one, but a large group of buyers commits the factory to invest in remediation. Effective sanctioning led to the most unsafe factories being temporarily or permanently shut, with remediation efforts monitored in almost all other factories, potentially saving the lives of thousands.
4. **Accountability through collective oversight:** Collective oversight over inspections can overcome some of the limitations of previous auditing approaches, such as lack of transparency. By including unions, the ILO and NGOs in oversight as well as placing factory reports and Steering Committee minutes in the public domain, buyers are incentivised to act on non-compliance. Parties without profit rationales can expose firms who seek to circumvent the collective approach. Transparency also re-enforces collective leverage, because even brands not covered under the Accord are less likely to source from factories that have found to be unsafe.
5. **Pooling of resources:** Pooling of resources increases marginal per capita return, which incentivises participants because they know that their individual contribution makes a bigger difference¹². With industry-wide contributions, a collective safety mechanisms can fund high-quality inspections with engineering teams specializing in fire, electrical and structural safety. Pooling of resources overcomes the deficiencies of single brand approaches such as lack of expertise, under-funding of specialized inspections and protocols for follow-up action and remediation. Cost sharing makes governance more accessible especially for smaller buyers with limited resources and further reduces incentives for free-riding.
6. **Highly focused approach:** One of the criticisms of the Accord is also one of its strengths. The Accord has a narrow focus on building, electrical and fire safety. While preventing fatalities within the industry, it has done little to increase poverty wages or extend

worker rights beyond safety. In contrast, wide-ranging approaches such as the UN Global Compact on the other end of the spectrum have been criticised for achieving few of their objectives. Focussing on a clear and tangible problem can concentrate actions and resources on delivering more effective problem solving.



Primark’s Kusha Mela – Compensation of Rana Plaza victims and their families

The Accord found more than 80,000 safety issues in its first round of inspections of 1,100 factories. Critical issues were found in almost each factory often despite having previously passed multiple social audits. As of 2017, 74% of identified safety issues have been reported or verified as fixed¹³, such as fire proofing the electrical wiring, installation of fire doors and fire systems as well as redistributing weight loads and strengthening the factory building’s columns (see Picture).

The Accord is not without problems associated with collective action. Firms can opt not to sign up to the collective agreement yet free ride on the contributions of signatory firms. In the case of the Accord, unions but particularly NGOs have played an active role in encouraging a large proportion of companies to participate. But their pressure may be less potent in absence of a tragedy that focuses critical attention on an entire industry. Then, the Accord has shown how private actors can overcome a collective action problem. But uncertainty about renewal, extension or replacement after its 2018 expiry date illustrates the need to build stronger links with national government and governance structures to ensure legitimacy and support of collective action mechanisms.

Conclusion

The Accord is an unprecedented example of how collective action in global supply chains can generate collective leverage and solve a collective action problem – despite a lack of reinforcing institutional support from the host government. The resulting mechanism has put an urgent halt to a tragic series of deadly factory incidents. Our argument is that the social partnership nature of the Accord has played a central role in its success by bringing together a plurality of interests and having inbuilt mechanisms for ensuring accountability through participation of unions and NGOs.

Viewing governance as a collective action problem helps improve our understanding of the complex institutional arrangements that can contribute to collective governance within complex global supply chains. A number of key lessons can be drawn. First, the collective approach enables a system which provides leverage between participants but also against those who may seek to free-ride. Secondly, collective oversight from an independent body provides a mechanism through which diverse actors can be guided down a common path. Finally, the inclusion of multiple interests enables the identification of mutual solutions to interests affecting particular parties.

A final and more general lesson to be drawn for the principle of social partnership is that, in the current neo-liberal environment, individual action and intense competition is often elevated above the benefits of cooperative and collaborative behaviour. Taking individual action as illustrated by the social auditing model adopted by many supply chains creates an inferior regime in terms of health and safety governance. The Accord demonstrates that collective responses have a central role to play in developing meaningful and sustainable governance mechanisms that can deliver common solutions despite competing interests.

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PRAXIS

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by Lucian J. Hudson

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and Neil Britto

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Leadership in Cross-Sector Collaboration: Multiple Perspectives

The theme running through this year's section is leadership in a broad range of collaboration contexts across public, private and civil society sectors. Our examples focus on nation-state diplomacy, a multinational beverage business and a global convening platform. We observe a strong expectation that leaders from all sectors are competent in cross-sector collaboration, which is increasingly seen as not only adding significant value, but being integral to success in achieving outcomes.

Leadership is important to any initiative with public problem-solving as a goal because of the need to engage effectively with a wide range of stakeholders. A

study of the conditions that enable this form of leadership to thrive is critical to understanding how exceptional leadership and team-building skills help to address challenges at local, national and international level.

The articles in the section reveal common issues faced by leaders when designing and implementing a cross-sector collaboration. Facilitating collaboration requires a form of leadership that inspires building confidence across sectors and nurtures trust, regardless of the sector that initiates the collaboration. There are political, strategic, economic and operational challenges to collaboration that can often only be navigated by deploying specific leadership assets, such as influencing, alliance and coalition building, and other forms of soft power.

A common element to cross-sector collaboration is the effort to address a public problem, which requires embracing complexity yet cutting through it with broad-based support. This is a type of leadership that enables collaboration to achieve its significant but often difficult full potential. Critical to increasing the probability of success is a nuanced strategy that draws on a specific leader's power, credibility, and capacity to navigate diverse norms and cultures of multiple sectors.

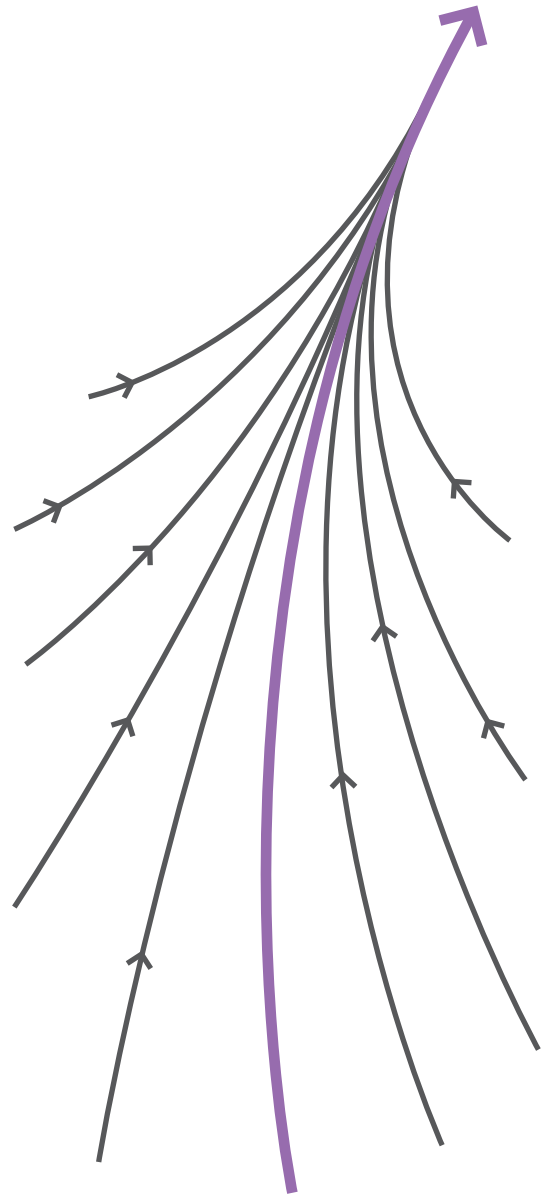
Each article reveals a facet of leadership ability that relates to the efficacy of government, business, and non-profit sector collaboration.

In James Pamment's article, the concept and exercising of soft power explains an important feature of diplomacy for addressing public issues. While the variation in how soft power originates, develops and is applied may vary across the spectrum of public sector entities, its importance cannot be ignored - particularly in the realm of cross-sector collaboration where the "intangible skills and assets" are a prerequisite to coordinating typically diverse interests, organizations and sectors towards a publicly beneficial goal.

The interview with Elizabeth Filippouli reveals the leadership qualities and challenges when designing a platform. From the constraints (e.g. loss of autonomy, perception of a short-term solution, the resiliency of a collaboration to a political cycle) to the prospects (e.g. influencing the values and management frameworks of leaders in a way that encourages cross-sector governance) there are ways to enhance the capabilities of leadership through fellowship and meaningful dialogue across leaders from multiple sectors in environments that enable vulnerability and sincere openness.

The examination of Diageo's work revealing effective stakeholder engagement is increasingly seen as integral to multinational business in terms of delivery of their objectives, and leadership in cross-sector collaboration is a critical part of that. This requires that business shows a deeper appreciation of its contribution to achieving social outcomes to build credibility and confidence.

The section demonstrates multiple purposes for cross-sector collaboration operating at local, regional, national and international levels. These collaborations can



include the use of government's distinctive soft power to achieve specific public policy outcomes, the formation of platforms to support leaders, and the many different types of business contributions to non-governmental initiatives. Regardless of objective, these articles collectively reveal that a deliberate and carefully calculated use of tangible and intangible tools is necessary for effective cross-sector leadership.



“Be more ambitious!” Universities are told in Approach to Mature Students

University leaders must be more creative and try innovative initiatives to entice adult learners from disadvantaged backgrounds into Higher Education, concludes a report looking at better ways to widen access and participation in this under-represented group.

Four universities collaborated on the project which was commissioned by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) to provide case studies of examples of outreach to disadvantaged adult learners across different contexts, for sharing with the rest of the sector. The universities were The Open University (OU) (project lead), University of Bristol, Birkbeck University of London and University of Leeds. The six-month project produced a report: Understanding the impact of outreach on access to Higher Education for disadvantaged adult learners.

The report includes five case studies from the participating universities, all illustrating different working approaches, appealing to adult and part-time students who require flexible support to engage with Higher Education studies. The report stresses that “one-size does not fit all”, and argues that universities must set ideas in their own context and develop them to suit their own adult learners’ needs.

A three-step “toolkit” has also been produced to enable institutions to evaluate their efforts and approach to encourage disadvantaged adult learners.

The project’s key recommendations to the sector are:

- Be as ambitious as possible
- Build confidence with small steps and/or tasters
- Commit a budgetary amount for spending on attracting adult learners
- Bridge the informal-formal learning divide
- Offer clear pathways
- Improve information and guidance directed at adult learners

In line with the key recommendations to encourage disadvantaged adult learners, the OU-led **Social Partnerships Network** has launched PEARL, a new website providing a one-stop shop for adults seeking part-time, flexible and tailored educational opportunities.

The importance of working in partnership to address such challenges has long been recognised and understood by The Open University. The OU has always worked collaboratively with institutions and like-minded organisations, to fulfil its mission to bring educational opportunities to all.

A full copy of the report is available on the OFFA website <https://www.offa.org.uk/publications/analysis-data-and-progress-reports/>



by James Pamment

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Cross-Sector Collaboration through Soft Power: *State of the Art, or Art of the State?*

Cross-sector collaboration is essential to the work of a modern government. As Jim Thompson observed in a recent issue of the *Annual Review of Social Partnerships*, “Partnerships are now endemic in the way we do business.”¹ Over the past decade or so, there has been a clear maturation of this line of thought. In the UK, for example, cross-sector collaboration was championed by Blair and Brown’s Labour governments because of the expertise, energy and legitimacy nongovernmental actors could bring to solving ‘wicked’ global problems. When the global economic crisis hit in 2008, the argument was strengthened by the recognition that governments could no longer afford to provide all services without support from the corporate and voluntary sectors. More recently, the collaborative approach has been underpinned by an interpretation of soft power that seeks to channel a much broader variety of national resources through public-private partnerships

to create added value for business and government alike. Regardless of the economic policies of the government of the day, more partnerships have been prioritised.

Nowhere is this transformation more obvious than in the traditionally esoteric business of diplomacy. It has become a cliché to argue that diplomats no longer hold a monopoly on inter-state relations. Wide-reaching social trends such as the globalization of risk, new media technologies and transnational lobbying networks have forced them to collaborate with actors outside of government in order to achieve their goals. Indeed, it is common for voluntary sector organisations and representatives, private enterprises and national and international public bodies to hold side-events at major negotiations, and in some cases to even have a seat at the table. The defining quality of the 21st century diplomat is the ability to drive agendas across organisations, sectors and borders. Hence, in many ways, diplomats have been at the forefront of the evolution of cross-sector partnerships.

The defining quality of the 21st century diplomat is the ability to drive agendas across organisations, sectors and borders.

In the recent book, *British Public Diplomacy & Soft Power*², I chart a 20 year period (1995-2015) during which the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) underwent complex processes of reform to work better with others across and outside of government. The rise of terms such as new public diplomacy and soft power were integral to this process, because they signified an intention to include wider groups of actors in the decision-making process. The development of public diplomacy at the FCO was a response to the creation of the departmental website in 1995, and a broad acceptance that, as a consequence, the relationship between diplomats and publics was forever changing. Despite many important efforts to establish cross-sector collaboration as the normal way of working, it would take a decade for these theories to reach the top of the agenda, and then a further decade for them to reach maturity.

A perfect storm of factors contributed to the increased attention placed on partnerships in the mid-2000s. Personalities were important: ministers Margaret Beckett, David Miliband and Jim Murphy understood the value of collaboration and empowered the FCO to develop its collaborative and communicative capacities. FCO staff including Lucian Hudson, whose *The Enabling State*³ remains the definitive work on this topic, instigated a re-shaping of the FCO's Communications Directorate to emphasise stakeholder management. Scholars, think tanks and consultants reached a rare, arguably unprecedented consensus over the ways diplomats should be working with others, as was represented in the ground-breaking publication *Engagement*⁴. Finally, the global economic crisis suggested that governments alone would no longer have the resources to pursue multiple international agendas without the support, expertise and financial backing of other likeminded actors.

A number of identifiable communication strategies for cross-sector partnerships have emerged over the years. Perhaps the most important is the *information subsidy* approach. In the FCO's international advocacy campaign on climate change, which began in 2007, Sir Nicholas Stern's 660-page report *The Economics of Climate Change*⁵ was used to start the conversation with foreign governments, NGOs, think tanks and media. The campaign was focused on delivering governmental objectives, yet involved collaboration across sectors with actors who were not subject to the government's views or discipline. On the contrary, governmental expertise, resources and agenda-setting capacities helped to empower transnational advocacy networks by providing a common frame of reference, regardless of whether they agreed with Stern's assertions. The publication was used as the launching point for many concurrent campaigns which had a cumulative impact on global perceptions of the issue. A similar technique was used in the infamous Weapons of Mass Destruction dossier released to shape debates around war in Iraq, and in the FCO's consultative publications prior to the Scottish referendum.

A second common partnership strategy is that of *facilitator*. In defining its policies for William Hague's 2013 *Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflict initiative* (PSVI), the FCO invited 150 voluntary sector representatives to help to define how the UK government should work in this area. The FCO then drove the agenda through the G8, UN Security Council and UN General Assembly, establishing an international rapid response team and working with the UN, national authorities and voluntary sector bodies to shape national and international guidelines for police and military. In this example, the UK used its influence within the UN to empower an agenda in the service of the expert organisations who were most capable of providing support on the ground. Facilitative approaches place the government in the "thought-leader" role, and utilise its prestige, influential individuals and networks as relatively low-cost resources to empower the work of others. Many other foreign ministries are currently attempting to mimic this approach, though few have achieved an equivalent impact to PSVI.

A third approach is that of *controlling the purse strings*. Under the Coalition and Conservative governments in the UK, public funds have been increasingly centralised

Soft power is more than a 21st century buzzword. It stands for those intangible skills and assets that diplomats harness to drive complex, often temporary coalitions of actors toward mutually beneficial goals.

in order to “task” governmental departments with activities according to government-wide strategies. Funds with names such as “Conflict, Stability and Security” place government departments in direct collaboration (and, potentially) competition with other task deliverers, such as private contractors and the voluntary sector. According to this approach, cross-sector collaboration stands for what is perceived to be the most efficient and cost-effective means of utilising public funds to achieve foreign policy objectives. Organisations like the FCO are forced to become more entrepreneurial, or face greater cutbacks and eventual irrelevance. The current GREAT promotional campaign⁶ has for example benefitted from more than 350 public-private partnerships, which have together raised £70m. Centralised control can help to identify rational patterns of collaboration between sectors, but comes at the cost of weakening the capacity of organisations to determine their own goals.

The evolution in these approaches may be encapsulated in two simple words: *soft power*. Though popularly understood as the power of attraction, it was originally defined as the ability to co-opt others through common values, in order to leverage that influence to other ends. In the UK, the last five years or so have witnessed the principles of soft power add an additional dimension to existing cross-sector collaboration practices. This is more than an afterthought or a bolt-on to traditional diplomacy. Many British overseas posts now have Prosperity Officers whose role is to identify opportunities for commercial and political departments to better coordinate their activities with private partners. It has become “business as usual”. Soft power is more than a 21st century buzzword. It stands

for those intangible skills and assets that diplomats harness to drive complex, often temporary coalitions of actors toward mutually beneficial goals. It is the essence of common purpose that underwrites any form of collaboration. Every contemporary foreign ministry is currently trying to understand how it can leverage its own version of soft power to shape effective collaborations across sectors. Some are better at this than others, perhaps because they have already undergone essential 21st century reforms, or because it suits some diplomatic traditions better than others. However, there can be little doubt that the future of diplomacy is one in which cross-sector collaboration is the rule rather than the exception.

Nonetheless, there remain risks. During the aforementioned climate change campaign, some advocacy organisations felt that they were being used by the government to create legitimacy, and they quickly became disillusioned over a perceived lack of influence over policy. In the PSVI campaign, some of the voluntary sector partners who had been involved in policy co-creation began vocally criticising the government. Their argument was simply that as pressure groups and advocacy bodies, it remains their job to hold government to account. In campaigns such as GREAT, many ideas, people and institutions are turned into promotional assets or resources that are valued purely through the lens of the campaign objectives. This can result in a loss of autonomy and identity. In each of these cases, cross-sector collaboration risks being seen as a short-term solution to a given problem. Future strategies will need to establish long-term protocols equivalent to those maintained between governments, in order to ensure that cross-sector collaboration can survive individual policy initiatives, individual staff, and individual governments.

Endnotes

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3. **Hudson L.J. 2009.** *The Enabling State: Collaborating for Success*. London: Foreign & Commonwealth Office.
4. **Welsh J. & Fearn D. (eds) 2008.** *Engagement: public diplomacy in a globalised world*. London: Foreign & Commonwealth Office.
5. **Stern N. 2007.** *Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change*. London: HM Treasury.
6. The GREAT promotional campaign is a major branding initiative supported by 17 government departments involved in boosting trade, investment, tourism and education particularly towards overseas markets.



Judith Houston

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Bringing Thought Leaders Together Through a Global Platform

Elizabeth Filippouli

is the Founder & CEO of **Global Thinkers Forum** (GTF), an international non-profit organisation that works as an agent for positive change by connecting international thought leaders and promoting values-based leadership and cross-sector collaboration. She talks to Judith Houston, ARSP Praxis Associate Editor about GTF's work and how cross-sector collaboration is enabling the organisation to deliver its aims.

Judith Houston [JH]: What is the Global Thinkers Forum?

Elizabeth Filippouli [EF]: The Global Thinkers Forum is a global platform that brings together a diverse network of thought leaders to share their visions of the future. I founded GTF whilst at Oxford University's Saïd Business School, and it launched officially in 2012 in Amman, Jordan, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah. We are headquartered in London and we organise a wide range of activities globally including seminars, fora, roundtable discussions, workshops, networking events, mentoring programmes and our Awards for Excellence, providing a platform for society and leaders to collaborate.

JH: What are the key aims of GTF?

EF: GTF's mission focuses on three areas: accountable leadership, women's empowerment and youth development. We position the organisation as a bridge-builder that constantly creates opportunities for joined up thinking, collaboration and new partnerships.



In doing so, we hope to drive positive change in our societies by creating a new generation of leaders, who are global thinkers and have the ability to collaborate and co-create value. But more practically, what we are looking to do is create positive change in people's lives. I personally believe that change does not happen overnight. It is the small, incremental changes that eventually add up and create transformation. At GTF we actively help people who join us by connecting them with peers, by empowering them with knowledge, by inspiring them with role models that are dynamic and pioneering change-makers.

JH: How are you using cross-sector collaboration to deliver on these aims?

EF: We believe that we need to build on collective intelligence and social capital. We do this through the events we run which provide a platform for dialogue and collaboration between public and private organisations. Participants span social, gender, ethnic and racial groups. Such diversity enables cross-cultural understanding and the opportunity to reflect on their values, from a global perspective. Coordinating people in this way enables us to achieve problem-solving through collaborative work. For example, all conversations and meetings under GTF convene representatives from different sectors, and we ask them to discuss solutions together, and ideas that enable capacity building and development. We remain a non-partisan and independent organisation that focuses on collaboration and understanding, abolishing hatred and polarisation.

JH: Can you tell us more about GTF's programmes?

We hope to drive positive change in our societies by creating a new generation of leaders, who are global thinkers and have the ability to collaborate and co-create value.



EF: We are particularly proud of our two international mentoring programmes: 'Telemachus' and 'Athena'. These programmes create conversations between young individuals from all over the world and international professionals with outstanding careers and achievements drawn from various sectors such as business, government, civil society, academia and the media. From Afghanistan to Colombia and from Canada to India, our mentors and mentees are based in over twenty countries and are creating value, knowledge and ideas for each other. The mentoring sessions take place on a one-to-one basis over a period of eight months and promote professional development, cross-cultural understanding and the notion of global thinking.

Mentees are supported and encouraged to develop new skills and expertise, which can make them not only more competitive in the international arena, but also more prone to operate under universal values and not under contextual beliefs. We have young mentees who say that their relationship with their GTF mentor changed their thinking, their attitude towards life because they learned how to embrace challenges and helped them look beyond the obvious. Many of our mentees come from either underprivileged backgrounds or live in countries that battle with severe issues i.e. war, poverty, lack of infrastructure, cultural barriers etc.

JH: What type of challenges did you face in the beginning? What challenges do you face today?

EF: We have been lucky enough to see that our work and mission have been acknowledged from our first year. Having a leader like Queen Rania al Abdullah as patron

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has been a privilege and an endorsement that gave us a tremendous recognition. On a day to day basis our challenge has been the continuous effort to fundraise in order to meet the demand for our work, events and initiatives.

JH: How has academic theory informed GTF's model?

EF: GTF was fostered in Said Business School, University of Oxford. Dr. Marc Ventresca's academic work in economic sociology and teachings on 'system building' have informed the GTF concept. More specifically, GTF's model is based on the idea that there is immense value in human networks and that careful network analysis provides tools to solve social and other challenges. Information flows through the pattern of social ties in a community. The structure of these ties distinguishes who accesses novel, timely, and quality information. Today, some of societies' biggest struggles are over identity, boundaries, long established rules and regulations.

Dr. Ventresca's teachings highlight the need to focus on a structure of social ties in order to resolve problems such as:

- > Information – how to know where and when opportunities exist;
- > Access to strategic partners and allies;
- > Control – how to protect knowledge and assets;
- > Legitimacy – how to be credible and taken seriously by key stakeholders; and
- > Collective action.

It is these challenges that triggered the thinking that informed GTF's creation.

JH: What does the future hold for GTF?

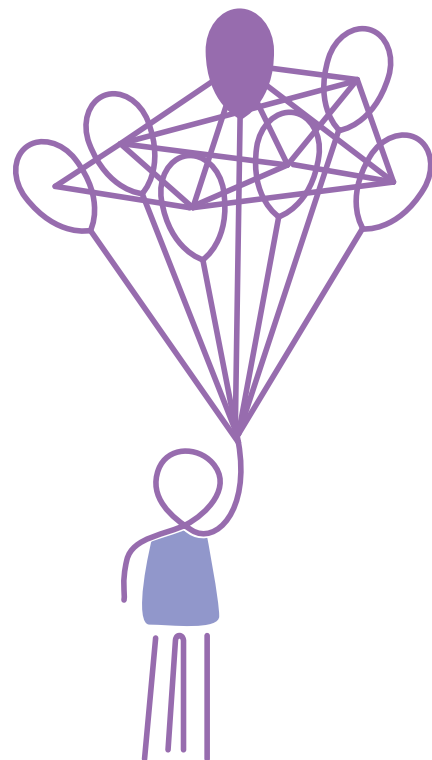
EF: Our overarching theme for 2017 is the trust gap between society and leadership. Last year we experienced two major shifts, Brexit and Donald Trump's election, both of which can be seen as the outcome of a widening confidence gap between people and our governance systems. Where is this going to lead and how can we start rebuilding trust? Trust is important for the success of public policy and an essential ingredient for business and an efficient economy. Trust is necessary for peace building and collaboration. We are therefore planning to introduce the GTF Council for Trust Building, in order to produce more

Leadership in the information age requires cross-boundary, inter-agency collaboration with networking as a core strategy.

thought leadership around this highly topical and important issue.

JH: What is the one biggest lesson relating to cross-sector collaboration that you have learnt?

EF: Leadership in the information age requires cross-boundary, inter-agency collaboration with networking as a core strategy. Networking and collaboration challenge the traditional power and role of hierarchy. Although it remains uncertain exactly how the spread of technology will change governance models, it is clear that old solutions will not work in this new era. Leaders will have to build beyond peer-to-peer alliances and invest in new cross-sectoral alliances that reflect the rise in citizen, voter and consumer power, and the changing nature of public-private partnership collaboration models.





by Michael Alexander

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Mapping Our Water Blueprint Through Collaboration

Abstract

This article explores how the multinational consumer goods giant Diageo is using cross-sector collaboration in its quest to tackle the challenges of water scarcity. It presents insights from Diageo and partner organisations into the opportunities and challenges that collaboration under the company's Water Blueprint strategy has created. It also discusses how collaboration with Diageo is adding value to partner organisations.

For those living in Gwam, a remote, rural community in Nigeria's Bauchi State, it was as if they had won the lottery. Ecstatic locals lined the streets, while drums beat in celebration. What had happened, in fact, was that they had just been given two solar-powered boreholes and two toilet blocks. "Many of us take water for granted, but it is like gold for those who do not have it," said Osita Abana, Sustainable Development & Alcohol in Society Manager for Guinness Nigeria, a subsidiary of Diageo, which funded the project.

Before that day in August last year, the people of Gwam had had to make do with a dirty stream or trek for miles for clean water. The new facilities are having an impact on far more than people's health and hygiene. This has freed up time for many members of the community, particularly women, to concentrate on other things, such as their livelihoods. Around 10,300 people in Gwam, and 1,500 people from neighbouring communities, are currently benefiting from the project.

An Ambitious Strategy Rooted in Collaboration

We are a beverage company so water is an essential ingredient in all of our products. With a third of Diageo's global volume now produced in water-stressed areas, water scarcity has naturally become a key consideration in driving the sustainable future growth of the business. It is amidst this backdrop that we published the 'Water Blueprint' in 2015. The Water Blueprint sets out our strategic approach to water stewardship. The strategy focuses on four interlinked areas – raw materials, production, communities and advocacy. It is based on understanding the impact the business has on water through the complete value chain and prioritising our activity accordingly, the overall aim being to reduce our impact particularly in water-stressed areas. It is ambitious and rooted in collaboration.

Water is a shared resource with complex interdependencies between often competing users. Solutions to the challenge of water scarcity vary depending on local conditions. To help us address these challenges and deliver on the aims of our Water Blueprint strategy, we have established more than 30 partnerships with NGOs across

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over 20 countries. By partnering with organisations that are already working on the ground and have local expertise, we can maximise our impact at a local level.

In Nigeria, we have collaborated with WaterAid Nigeria to deliver meaningful projects in local communities such as constructing solar-powered boreholes and toilet blocks. Investing in communities in water stressed areas in which we operate is a key pillar of the Water Blueprint strategy. In doing so, we not only alleviate water poverty, we support local agricultural activities in communities that grow crops which are part of Diageo’s supply chain. Collaborating with WaterAid Nigeria has made the difference between long-term success and corporate tokenism. Nigeria has around 200 tribes and as many, if not more, languages. WaterAid Nigeria knew which community needed critical help, could speak the language and understood the culture, all of which was vital to make a real and sustainable difference. Our partnership with WaterAid extends globally and as well as implementing projects locally, it covers other key areas of the Water Blueprint strategy such as global advocacy, lobbying and employee engagement. In developing the Water Blueprint, we have also partnered with the UN’s CEO Water Mandate, which encourages business leaders to advance water stewardship, sanitation and the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals through partnerships. This platform has helped us to better understand the fast-changing external water policy agenda.

Critical elements for success

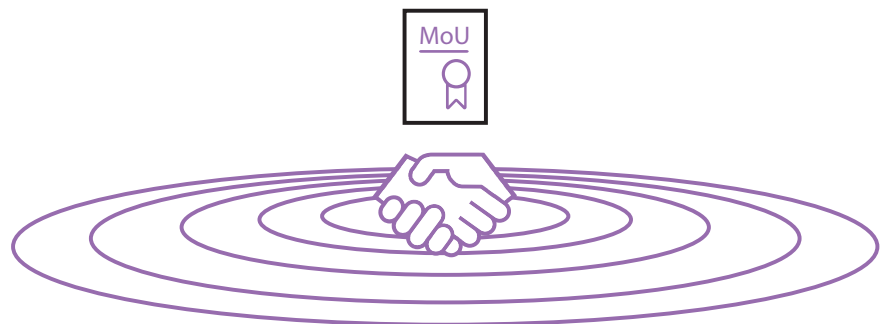
Collaboration between vastly different organisations can, of course, have its frustrations. Something that has

By partnering with organisations that are already working on the ground and have local expertise, we can maximise our impact at a local level.

worked particularly well with WaterAid has been a memorandum of understanding (MoU) which will last for four years. The MoU provides a clear framework and point of reference which not only cements our relationship, but enables us to work to our mutual benefit on a global level. “We have clear expectations about what our relationship should be delivering, which was helpful in getting our new relationship with Guinness Nigeria going and making it work well,” said Michael Ojo, Country Director of WaterAid Nigeria.

“It takes trust and lots of conversations to really get down to the nitty-gritty of what you are going to do,” said James Jackson, WaterAid UK’s Corporate Partnership Manager. “All partnerships take a lot of time and effort, you have to understand the perspective of the other organisation.”

Jackson advises regular checks of the partnership’s core purpose. “Every six months we return to our global MoU. It is a very active document. That regular check-in has helped our partnership grow and expand rather than keep to a status quo. We are on an upward trajectory and



Collaboration between vastly different organisations can, of course, have its frustrations. Something that has worked particularly well for us has been a memorandum of understanding (MoU) which provides a clear framework and point of reference, to work towards mutual benefits on a global level.

it is those regular check-ins, and holding yourself accountable, that make a big difference to the partnership.”

From Diageo’s viewpoint, David Croft, Global Sustainable Development Director at Diageo, recommends “...that people are acutely aware of the different organisational cultures and values that exist. Be prepared to compromise in terms of how you work and specifically what you want to deliver for your own organisation. The partnership will not work without an element of compromise from everybody involved. Be aware of how those organisational cultures mean that decisions will be arrived at in a different way – maybe faster, maybe slower. And manage your timelines for the group rather than for your individual organisation. Be aware of a different language that stems from that and be consistent about it.”

Most of all, a successful collaboration comes down to trust and honesty. “The most important thing is to be honest about the vision and what you are prepared to compromise on,” Croft said. “Even if you have a shared vision, if you are not honest about how you can achieve it, the partnership will not work.”

Diageo has not always got it right. We need to be more agile at times to avoid delays. We need to be more mindful of differences in organisational culture and ways of working. Another important challenge is to show our

brand and commercial teams the real value of what we are doing across the breadth of our Water Blueprint – this is not a CSR initiative, this is fundamental to the future success of our business.

Empowering Our Partners

As well as having a positive impact on Diageo’s long term resilience to water scarcity, collaboration driven by our Water Blueprint strategy has been making significant differences to the ability of partner organisations to deliver on their own ambitions.

“The real strength of working with Diageo has been an insight into how companies are thinking about water and sanitation,” said Jackson. “It really helped to inform our views around how we can bring others in the private sector on board to achieve our mission of giving everyone everywhere access to water and sanitation by 2030, and in so doing meet Goal 6 of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure access to water and sanitation for all.”

“They have access to people we do not. They are now speaking at UN conferences to other organisations about what they should be doing about water and sanitation within their own supply chain and sustainability agenda. WaterAid can talk about it all day long to the private sector, but if the private sector is talking about water and sanitation amongst themselves, that is a much stronger message. It has been a really positive experience.”

Looking to the Future

From a personal perspective, working with partner organisations has really opened my eyes to how much more successful we can be if we take a collaborative approach. However much we think we know the detail about an issue, it is nothing compared with the different perspectives and experience of working alongside experts – and we find solutions together that we would never have thought of on our own. Diageo has ambitious, integrated targets for water stewardship to benefit all stakeholders, and there is no way we could do it by ourselves. It is immensely inspiring.

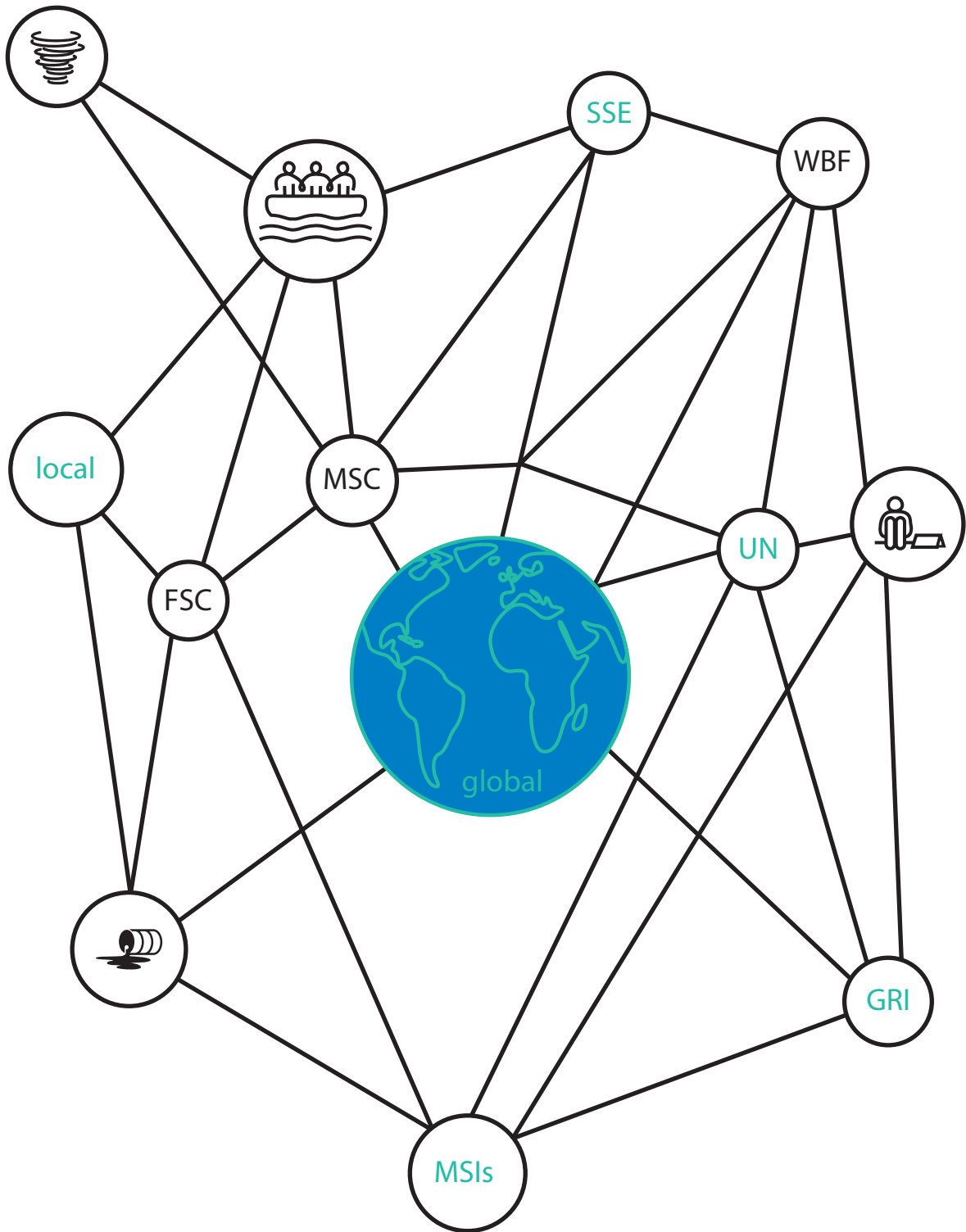


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by Vivek Soundararajan

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Bringing the “Multiple” Back into the Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives

The emerging forms of interconnected local and global economic activities enable firms to create economic value on the one hand, but on the other hand confront them with new and ambiguous governance complexities. More often firms are good at identifying solutions to deal with commerce issues. However, when the governance complexity is related to social and environmental issues, even large multi-national companies stumble. Continuous occurrences of social and environmental calamities around the world suggest that companies are not yet sufficiently well equipped to deal with highly complex social and environmental governance issues by themselves.

Given that the individual capacities of nation states, civil society organisations and global institutions to resolve complex governance issues are limited, rather than merely relying on these actors, many companies resort to multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs). These are private, quasi-voluntary governance mechanisms aimed at bringing together different stakeholders—including companies, civil society actors, trade associations, academics, and governments from across the globe—to solve complex social and environmental issues. MSIs are also referred to as social standards, compliance mechanisms, voluntary

governance mechanisms, international accountability standards, sustainability standards or private regulations.

There are different types of MSIs and there is no universal classification. Given that they vary in terms of processes, content and underlying norms, arriving at specific categories is impossible. I propose a broad classification of MSIs as instruction or enforcement-oriented. Instruction-oriented ones generally offer guidance on acceptable business behaviour and offer a platform to share best practices. MSIs like the United Nations (UN) Global Compact, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), and the Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative (SSE) fall into this category. Enforcement-based MSIs, on the other hand, monitor, verify and certify production facilities against an established

“The team worked together to dig deeper into the issues around MSIs and explored promising solutions by directly speaking to relevant stakeholders and experts...”

EDITORIAL

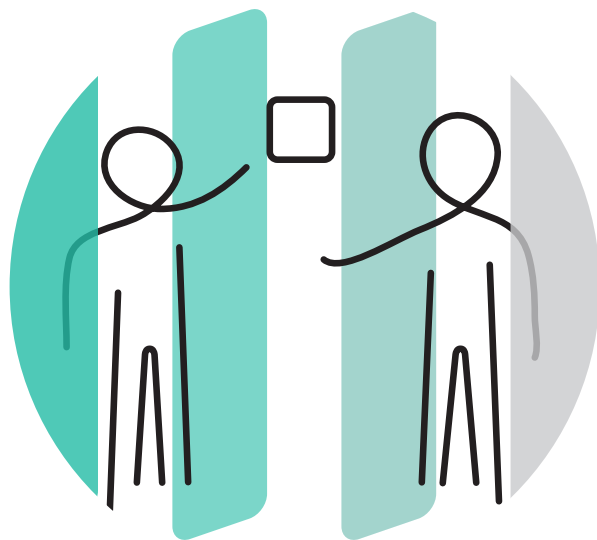
benchmark for acceptable social and environmental business practices. MSIs like the World Banana Forum (WBF) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) fall under this category.

MSIs are seen as important governance instruments - both in academia and practice - mainly because they are believed to be based on ideas of collaboration between multiple stakeholders, and increased accountability and transparency. As a result, the number of MSIs is growing and the number of companies joining them is also increasing. However, it does not follow from this proliferation of MSIs that they have been successful in addressing the issues for which they were originally created. Incidents of poor social and environmental performance seem to pop up even in facilities that carry the certification seals of MSIs. In the ARSP's Thought Gallery, Juliane Reinecke and Jimmy Donaghey discuss the situation in Bangladesh, where social auditing alone has failed to ensure safe working conditions for the many thousands of ready-made garment workers.

Bringing multiple stakeholders together to solve complex governance issues is an excellent idea. But, what exactly is keeping MSIs from realising their goals? Research has identified various issues in the current forms of MSIs, including power asymmetry between different stakeholders¹, exclusion of some important stakeholders (especially the marginalised ones)², cost of bringing together diverse stakeholders, certification costs³, auditor incapability⁴, issue reductionism, too much reliance on ticking boxes or compliance⁵, and institutionalised corruption.

Scholars, policy makers and practitioners are just beginning to scratch the surface of understanding how to make MSIs work. In this year's Community Section, the team worked together to dig deeper into the issues around MSIs and explored promising solutions by directly speaking to relevant stakeholders and experts. In total, there are four contributions in this year's Section.

In the first contribution, Jill Bogie interviews Yemi Oloruntuyi, Head of the Developing World programme at the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), the global alliance for sustainable fishing practices. This interview reveals important insights into MSC's partnership initiative for fisheries improvement in the developing world. In the



interview, Yemi Oloruntuyi illuminates the critical challenges they encountered around partnership building, especially with developing country stakeholders and how they went about resolving them. She also discusses how to develop innovative incentive structures to bring together MSC certification and multi-stakeholder interests.

The second contribution presents an interview by Domenico Dentoni with Fabrizio Ferraro, Professor of Strategic Management at IESE Business School, University of Navarra. His research explores the emergence of responsible investing in mainstream financial markets and investigating the kind of architecture required for MSIs to solve grand sustainability challenges. This interview highlights the importance of 'robust' actions that foster sustained engagement of multiple stakeholders to deal effectively with sustainability challenges, offering a stimulating explanation of what a robust action entails and the vital role of dialogue.

In the third contribution, Momtazul Karim, a tannery owner in Bangladesh, is interviewed by Md Nazmul Hasan. While the first two interviews provide an MSI perspective, this interview offers a bottom-up outlook of the reality of day-to-day challenges that exporters or users of MSIs in developing countries face in running their business. Especially, it highlights the increasing pressure to act sustainably and the lack of support they receive from their core international and local stakeholders. Most importantly, Momtazul Karim highlights how international demands

are not in line with local contextual realities - a challenge that is frequently being exposed in recent research and practice.

The final section offers an opinion piece by Bimal Arora, Chairperson of the Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) in India, discussing the current state of play of the rapidly evolving MSI phenomenon. He offers a bold and even-handed opinion, highlighting the limitations MSIs face and the complexities associated with addressing issues around legitimacy and participation. As a means of addressing these challenges, he directs our attention towards building human and institutional capacities and experience around MSIs to enable participation.

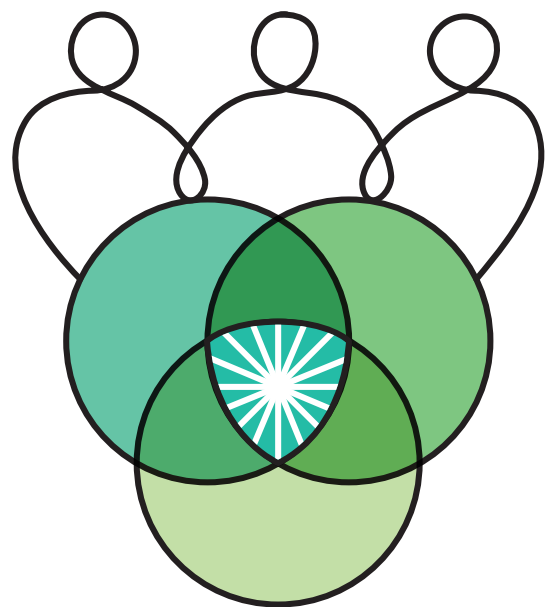
A close examination of these contributions reveals that MSIs include stakeholders with diverse identities, roles, contexts, life experiences and institutions. However, as yet, many MSIs are not sufficiently inclusive and many are dominated by powerful stakeholders. Diverse stakeholders cannot be brought together simply through enforcement or compliance. More enforcement can increase resistance from stakeholders, especially those whose inputs and voices are marginalised. Such friction can hamper MSIs' efforts to achieve their objectives. MSIs must enable all participating stakeholders to recognise their overlapping interests while satisfying their own self-interest. The self-interest can be tangible economic benefits or intangible benefits such as reputation. They must enable

“In simple terms, MSIs should move away from focussing too much on compliance towards enabling effective collaboration between multiple stakeholders to realise their ambitions for transformational change. It is time to bring the ‘multiple’ back into MSIs!”

stakeholders to appreciate the value of contributing to the collaborative endeavour. They must empower stakeholders to feel that they are part of it. This cannot be achieved if an MSI is perceived to be undemocratic or exclusive. In simple terms, MSIs should move away from focussing too much on compliance towards enabling effective collaboration between multiple stakeholders to realise their ambitions for transformational change. It is time to bring the ‘multiple’ back into MSIs!

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Jill Bogie

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Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Fisheries Improvement: *Learning by Example, Increasing Technical Capacity and Creating New Incentives*

Dr Yemi Oloruntuyi

is Head of the Developing World programme at the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) based in London and she is a member of MSC's Global Science and Standards Team - Fisheries.

Jill Bogie spoke with her about how the MSC engages in multi-stakeholder partnerships to support fisheries improvement initiatives.

BACKGROUND

JB: How did the MSC establish the partnerships initiative for fisheries improvement in the developing world and what were the objectives?

YO: At the time I joined the MSC there wasn't yet a definitive proof of concept and there was a recognition that when it came to developing world fisheries we needed to have a better understanding of the challenges and we needed to identify technical or strategic solutions to address these issues.

It is actually something that started in the beginning but we were just not calling it fisheries improvement projects. We realised that as the MSC programme developed and people started to identify with sustainable seafood in the market, there were some fisheries that wanted to be in that space but after they had done the gap analysis they recognised that they were not at the point where they could be certified. And then it spread from developed



Understanding what good looks like provides a very clear motivation for people to engage in a partnership.

for some fisheries. This lack of understanding was an initial barrier and made it difficult to even begin to start talking and thinking about partnerships.

I think the lack of evidence initially was a challenge because people hadn't seen examples of how it could work and they were reluctant to be around a multi-stakeholder initiative. So one of the ways that the challenges have been addressed was just people seeing the concept being established and seeing it work in practice. Once we had enough evidence and examples, they provided sufficient motivation for a government, for example, to say this is a way to get our fisheries to improve or for the market to say this might help us to access new markets or for fisheries to say this will help us to make sure that we don't lose business. So having examples of success was a good way to address some of those particular issues.

countries, where there was a lot of activity and growth in the number of fisheries becoming certified, to developing countries where the need for these types of improvement was very pertinent.

INITIAL CHALLENGES:

JB: What were the initial challenges around building partnerships and how did you address them?

YO: There were a number of challenges. There was an issue around understanding and appreciating what the MSC was all about. So part of that was having an awareness of MSC, what MSC was about and how it worked. Then another issue was a perception and some concern that MSC might be a means to prevent access to markets

JB: After that initial period, what further challenges did you encounter?

YO: It has been an evolving process and when we actually overcame those barriers and there was some sense of trust and understanding that certification was actually a means to gain market access and not a barrier to trade but a reward for harvesting sustainably, another issue was then around leadership. So when you have a fishery that wanted to work towards sustainability and we tried to establish partnerships around that fishery that included NGOs, markets, government and so on, if there wasn't a specific person who was clearly motivated to champion the process and drive the process forward, it could lead to a lack of progress in that partnership.

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Then funding is obviously important. It's hard to get partnerships to work if the resources to facilitate the activities of those partnerships are not available. So we have the support of the Resources Legacy Fund to support fisheries. And in the last year the MSC itself launched the Global Fisheries Sustainability Fund to provide funding for fisheries to help them work with partners to carry out improvements that are needed for them to progress to MSC certification in the future.

If I could give an example of a successful partnership process, one certified fishery is the Suriname Seabob fishery in South America. Before it achieved certification it was a partnership initiative that involved activities from the industry, the market, a range of scientists and NGOs. Through the different efforts of these various partners they were able to carry out activities such as research, work with the government to develop a code of conduct and a management plan for the fishery to improve.

KEY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

JB: What were the big learning experiences from the partnership activities for the MSC and for some of the key stakeholders?

YO: From an MSC perspective what made it work was the presence of a framework. The MSC standard and the methodology of the pre-assessment and gap analysis gave people a framework through which they could identify the gaps and be very specific about what needed to be done and what their goal and endpoint was. Also in 2012 we published a document on partnering for sustainable fisheries that documented our experiences in a systematic way so that people would be able to use it to help them develop new partnerships.

Based on discussions I have had outside the MSC, for stakeholders what is important is knowing your particular role within an improvement project and being very precise about where you fit into the whole picture. What we've learnt from this experience is that understanding what good looks like provides a very clear motivation for people to engage in a partnership.



Offloading catch at the Suriname Atlantic Seabob fishery

PERSISTENT PROBLEM AREAS:

JB: Do you have any persistent problem areas and have you identified new ways to tackle these?

YO: There are situations where things haven't worked as quickly and as nicely as we would have liked and a key challenge has been the technical capacity. So you may have a good idea of what your challenges are but if you have issues with trying to implement the improvements, such as limited capacity, then it becomes difficult for those partnerships to work.

One of the things that we have developed is a technical consultants register, which is a register of experts that people could directly refer to if they need assistance. It includes people who have successfully supported other fisheries in their journey towards certification so that they are able to share their experiences with other fisheries where these challenges might still exist. We have also developed a comprehensive capacity building programme and we are providing training to develop the expertise and skills needed to implement the activities of an improvement plan. This is a 5-day programme where we go into extensive detail about the MSC standard, explaining how things are scored. We also discuss how other fisheries in the past have addressed gaps and we bring in examples of how other fisheries have worked with different partners, how they've utilised resources and worked together towards getting certified.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: INNOVATIONS

JB: Looking to the future in terms of the partnerships, what are the new challenges that you are addressing as you go forward?

YO: In terms of new challenges, one is to create incentives for certain types of fisheries. The MSC concept works on the basis of the market wanting sustainable seafood. The issue of course is that not all markets are sufficiently aware of sustainability. In Northern Europe and North America there is a significant commitment to sustainability but less so in other parts of the world. We've tended traditionally to focus on markets and retailers and that's where our strength is and strategically it makes sense to continue that. But it's also recognising that the MSC programme provides recognition for good performance and this can be applied in other ways. There is a need to create incentives in parts of the world where there is a high

Certification could be aligned to the investors' interests so that the incentive comes from the finance organisation if not the market itself.

consumption of seafood, such as South East Asia and China, so even if you can get 1% traction in the market you are getting a significant footprint.

JB: Could you expand on how these incentives work?

YO: For example, increasingly financial organisations and investors are developing corporate social responsibility policies and they are interested in demonstrating that they are not investing in entities that are contributing to the decimation of our natural resources. Capital has become very international and many fisheries require finance either to invest in the fishery itself or invest post-harvest and they need funding from these global entities that might be based in Hong Kong or London. The investors require assurances that the production activity or the source of the fish does not compromise the ability of the fishery to continue to be productive in the future. This means that certification could be aligned to the investors' interests so that the incentive comes from the finance organisation if not the market itself. We've only had a handful of examples of the finance sector being able to provide that leverage and the question we are exploring now is around how we can take that to scale.

Regarding small-scale fisheries, we are looking at the challenges in developing and developed countries, as they have similar issues. We are doing so with a much more considered focus than we've had the capacity to do in the past and we are currently setting up a supply chain task force to ask questions about the challenges for small-scale fisheries and to brainstorm new ways to address these.

JB: Thank you so much for your time and sharing your experiences at the MSC.



Domenico Dentoni
Associate Professor at the Global
Center for Food Systems Innovation
of Wageningen University & Research.

Tackling Sustainability Challenges: *How, When and Why?*

Prof. Fabrizio Ferraro

is Professor of Strategic Management, IESE Business School, University of Navarra. His research explores the emergence of responsible investing in mainstream financial markets.

Domenico Dentoni spoke with him on how companies engage with stakeholders to address global challenges related to sustainability.

DD: Which organizations that you would consider Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs) have attracted your interest recently?

FF: MSIs are not the principal focus of our research, but we have stumbled upon this phenomenon, owing to our interest in sustainability challenges and the governance of organizations in unusual settings. The empirical work we were undertaking on these topics triggered our reflections on the kind of action that could better address sustainability problems. One of these actions is indeed engaging on an ongoing basis with actors who have a wide variety of agendas, goals and values, as often takes place in MSIs.

That said, two MSIs have attracted our interest recently. First, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which is clearly multi-stakeholder, given the wide range of stakeholders involved in it. In this case, we analyzed in depth the role



of analogies in the emergence of this practice¹. To do so, we investigated in detail how the GRI governance (membership, etc.) was orchestrated. Overall, I would consider GRI successful, as the quality of corporate reporting and the number of reports has increased, despite the fact that the reporting involves the completion of very complex datasets by the companies involved. Given the nature of sustainability challenges, we cannot say that the improvement of corporate reports is attributable exclusively to GRI, but it is accepted that, over time, GRI has established itself as the most successful initiative in sustainability reporting.

A second case that has attracted our attention is the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI). We started exploring this case in 2008, before the financial crisis. Founded by the United Nations, PRI involves all the major

asset-owners, asset-managers, pension funds and consultants (governments are not represented but sometimes figure as stewards of public pension funds). Corporations and NGOs play a much more limited role than in MSIs, such as the GRI. PRI is the most successful initiative in its space, but it is still too early to evaluate it in terms of its social and environmental impacts.

DD: There is a growing societal expectation that MSIs address grand challenges (also variously called ‘wicked problems’, ‘social messes’, etc.). Are MSIs fulfilling this promise? Why? When? How?

FF: On the basis of some of our recent research², we have framed this question as: *What kind of action is most effective in dealing with sustainability challenges?* Then, we identified and analyzed dimensions of these actions that are - or should be - present in MSIs. Using a sociological perspective, we called these actions ‘robust’ and highlighted two key dimensions that render these actions effective: novelty generation and sustained engagement. Yet, predicting when robust actions will be effective in addressing sustainability challenges remains difficult. How and why should we expect effectiveness and efficiency from a process that is messy in nature? We are still seeking to develop stronger, tighter theoretical arguments as to why and how we should expect these actions to have impactful sustainability outcomes.

Moving to the “how” and “when” questions, we suggest that robust action entails a participatory architecture, distributed experimentation and multi-vocal artifacts. When these dimensions are present, we argue that the process is more likely to foster sustained engagement of multiple stakeholders in the long-run. Finally, regarding the “why” question, we believe that these actions may be effective in dealing with messy challenges because they trigger and sustain dialogue among stakeholders. However, we did

“Robust action entails a participatory architecture, distributed experimentation and multi-vocal artifacts”

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not use the word “dialogue” in our work on robust action and we are now seeking to further this line of thought in our ongoing work on shareholder engagement.

DD: From your perspective, to address grand challenges, to what extent do (or should) MSIs incorporate 2 features within their organizations or at the boundary with other organizations (i.e. other MSIs or other stakeholders)?

FF: We do not necessarily have a preference for communitarian features in MSIs, but we are quite interested in understanding which organizational characteristics enable more successful engagement in MSIs. As MSIs ultimately aim to bring together stakeholders into a synthesis of joint dialogue, the question boils down to what enables dialogue across organizations.

To address this question, we believe that a number of literature streams could be fruitfully integrated to address this question. First of all, social movement theory may help to understand how corporations may become more receptive to the voice of movements, as well as how movements may exercise more influence on other stakeholders³. Furthermore, we can build on the important insights of the literature on corporate citizenship, especially as it developed Habermasian insights on communicative action and democratic deliberation⁴.

“It is crucial that academics align expectations with practitioners from the start”

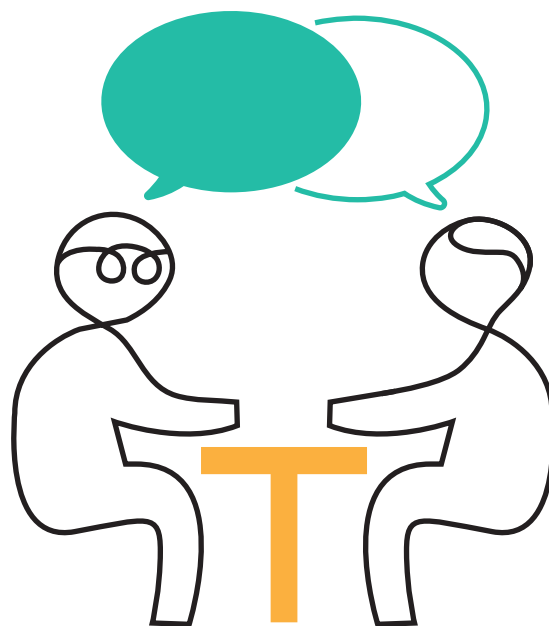
DD: From your perspective, which role should academics (and academic organizations) play within or around MSIs?

FF: Personally, I have mixed feelings on the involvement of academics with MSIs. On the one hand, we believe that having researchers in the field is always good – whether one’s methods are more qualitative or quantitative. On the other hand, there is always a risk that the researchers

may “go native”, that is, to become activists and start promoting that issue or cause in society. Some stakeholders appreciate the benefits of engaging with an academic as an opportunity to reflect on what they are doing and how they can do things better. However, other practitioners only view engagement with academics as a means of promoting their own initiative and issue. Given these challenges, it is crucial that academics align expectations with practitioners from the start and structure their collaboration accordingly. Furthermore, during or after engaging with practitioners, it is critical that academics go back to their communities of scholars to gain a deeper and more detached perspective on the insights they gained from practitioners.

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Md Nazmul Hasan

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Barriers and Challenges to Environmentally Friendly Manufacturing in Developing Countries: *The Views of a Young Tannery Owner in Bangladesh*

Momtazul Karim

Owns a tannery in Bangladesh that supplies to European buyers.

Md Nazmul Hasan spoke with him on the challenges tanneries in Bangladesh face and the multi-stakeholder support they receive to reduce negative environmental impacts.

The Hazaribagh leather tanning area recently received significant attention from international NGOs and development partners such as the World Bank and the UK Department for International Development (DFID). In 2013, the area was also named 5th most polluted place on earth in a report published by the Zurich-based Green Cross Switzerland and the New York-based Blacksmith Institute.

Md Nazmul Hasan (MNH): Can you give us an overview of your business?

Momtazul Karim (MK) – the tannery owner: Karim Leathers Limited was started from scratch in 1983 by my late father Rezaul Karim. Today, our business is the third largest high end leather manufacturer in Bangladesh. We produce approximately four million square-feet of finished leather per month. Our main products are crust and finished leathers and we are one of the very few tanneries here in Hazaribagh that deals directly with European buyers.

INTERVIEW

MNH: What initiatives has your business taken so far to reduce its negative environmental impacts?

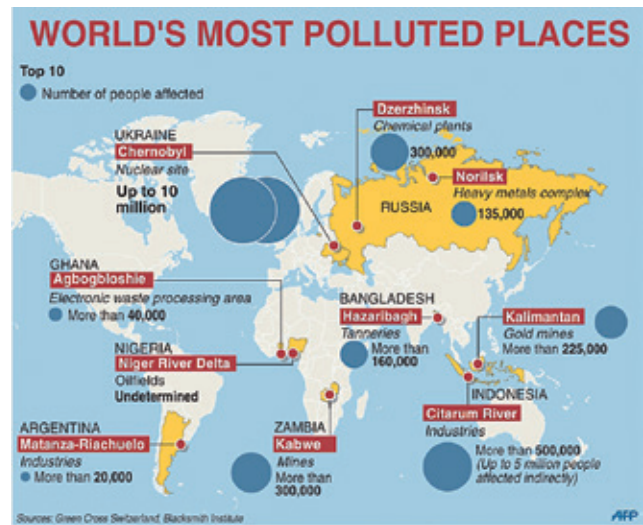
MK: We have earned internationally recognised compliance certificates. The only one we do not have is an environmental certificate, because we do not have any effluent treatment plants (ETPs), just like all other tanneries in Hazaribagh. But we are working in earnest to improve our environmental performance. If you tested even my factory’s chemical substance discharge, you would notice that the amount of hazardous chemicals is very low. Now we are trying to establish a ‘salt-free’ tanning system within our factory, but we are still in the trial process. I hope that, within the next three-four months, we will be able to run our production processes without any salt. If we succeed in this, it will mean that we will no longer be dispersing saline water into the environment, which would be a significant achievement, and we are doing this with our own initiative.

I am not sure about others, but I think that we are the only company to have enlisted the help of consultants from Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. We are investing an enormous amount of money in our new environmentally friendly project because we aspire to earn the Leather Working Group (LWG) certificate in the near future.

MNH: Do you get any support (either financial or technical) from buyers to improve the environmental performance of your business?



Untreated waste outside a tannery in Hazaribagh



MK: In plain and simple terms, not at all. And this is something the pressure groups tend to forget when imposing their strict requirements. We must remember that leather tanning is a competitive business and that, at the end of the day, any cost we incur has a commercial impact [*emphasised*] that ends up increasing the product price, affecting our foreign customers and the retail buyers. And the harsh reality is that they [the buyers] will never pay us one single penny for any environmental mitigation efforts. All the buyers want to talk about is: “Yes, Bangladesh must do this, do that”. No buyers, not a single one has ever said: “Okay, I will pay you extra for installing ETPs”. Because the buyers look at what is more economical for them. As long as the media is not covering the issue or the environmental agencies are not saying anything against their brands, they do not worry. The big brands especially, that buy in bulk volume from different suppliers, say nothing.

MNH: Do you get any support from other stakeholders, e.g. NGOs?

MK: The European Union funded a project called SWITCH-Asia a couple of years ago, which helped in raising awareness about negative environmental impacts of tanneries in Hazaribagh. SWITCH-Asia project consultants provided training on environmentally friendly tanning processes, minimising water usage, chromium-free tanning and occupational health and safety for the tannery workers. Apart from that, I cannot recall any other support from anyone in the recent past.

MNH: Do you source your raw materials responsibly?

MK: If you are asking me whether I am sourcing the raw materials with full traceability, then I am sorry; I cannot say that I do. But, through our own initiatives, we are trying to trace our raw materials (cow hides and chemicals) from the mid-point.

If you are talking about purchasing raw materials responsibly, it also means that I do not have to pay unfair prices for my raw materials, right? But this is also a problem in Bangladesh. Tannery owners can sometimes be confronted with extremely high prices that are incompatible with the international leather market. During the Qurbani (i.e. the Eid-ul-Adha/festival of Sacrifice) season, tannery owners buy cow hides from middlemen with bundles of cash, so the supply is low and the demand is high. As a result, the middlemen overcharge us, and we pay. This is why we fail to strike a balance with the international leather prices. Most tanners these days are new to the industry; they have the money, but not the knowledge. First of all, you have to understand the international market. See, I would pay for all types of environmental mitigation efforts if the product that I am selling could absorb the costs. I would stop doing it without anybody's permission the moment I realised that I was losing my money!

MNH: Do you feel any regulatory pressure to change the environmental performance of your business?

MK: Yes, huge pressure, and unethical pressure from the government at this very moment. The government is pushing all tannery owners to move their factories to a new location outside Dhaka (the capital). But the government does not even know when the new industrial area will be ready, how the waste treatment facility would work there, and what impact it will have on the business. Nobody knows anything, the government had an election agenda to shift us to a new place and this is what it is doing. It is just pushing without any consideration for the consequences. I am highly sceptical about whether this relocation will be a successful one.

In fact, this decision was taken a long time ago. It took the government ten years to finally put it into practice, which has made the tanneries in the Hazaribagh area even more unsustainable in recent times. Those owners who had taken initiatives to mitigate their negative environmental impacts eventually started thinking that investing in

environmentally friendly technologies in their current locations would be a waste of money. This is another reason why the physical environment in the Hazaribagh area has worsened in recent years.

MNH: What are the key challenges you face in terms of doing business in an environmentally friendly way?

MK: Corruption, lack of education, lack of understanding of the international leather trade, and lack of understanding of logical business benefits. Education is a big issue here; non-technical people are developing and enforcing ill-informed environmental policies. They are providing unsustainable approaches that are totally incompatible with the international leather business.

Leather is something we do not consume locally, it is an international product. Leather must be designated as one of the highly technical sectors. I truly believe that the work we do is helping society. Should we, the tanners, not carry out our production in Bangladesh, where would the government dump all the millions of cow and goat hides? I imagine that there would be epidemics; diseases would spread across the country and people would have to leave.



Workers carrying Wet Blue cow hides on a Wheelbarrow



Bimal Arora

Chairperson, Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) and Visiting Fellow, Aston Business School (ABS) & Alliance Manchester Business School (AMBS)

Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives: Journey and the Future

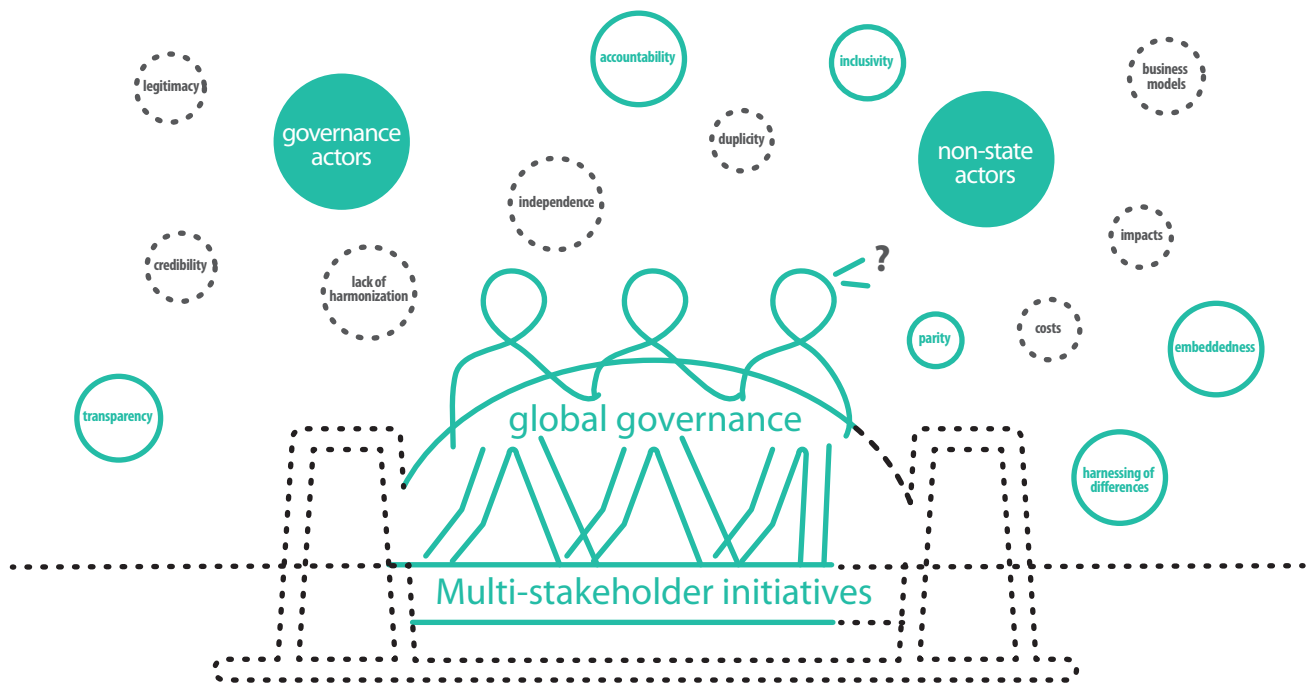
W e live in an interconnected, interdependent world characterized by inherent complexity, specialist knowledge and technical expertise. It is also highly political with clashing views, vested interests, entrenched disparities and wicked problems, in need of transformational shifts at scale. Despite their constitutionally derived legitimate authority, nation states, as traditional governance actors, may no longer be able to engage with and resolve most issues single-handedly, by means of formal regulations, to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. Other societal and institutional actors need to take responsibility by participating in local governance processes, across geopolitical boundaries and in the global arena. The problems at hand are too multifaceted to be solved by a single institutional actor, therefore, a dense constellation of actors and relationships, mechanisms, processes and rules appear imperative.

Multi-stakeholder initiatives, or MSIs, have grown in variety, prominence and importance since the 1980s. There are two schools of thought. One argues that the nation states were unwilling and unable to manage, hence they receded from their traditional roles, opening up opportunities for non-state actors. Analysts from the other school argue that the state deliberately changed the forms and methods of engagement, thereby creating space for

other actors to participate. The need for partnerships, co-operative planning and collective action to address global and local challenges was established by the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and strengthened by the most recent Paris Climate Agreement, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 and several global forums and conferences in between.

MSIs are intended as an endeavor in multi-stakeholder governance, to enable a range of non-state actors to participate in global governance, in particular the regulation of business conduct. Drawing legitimacy and strength from the concepts and principles of democracy and multi-stakeholderism, MSIs are also believed to be a mechanism and an institutional form suited to dealing with problems and issues of governance, which are beyond the control of any single regulatory jurisdiction. Therefore MSIs are generally identified with polyarchic relations, tied by rules, in principle following a universal governance approach related to issues of public concern. MSIs attract huge scholarly, policy and practitioner interest. However, this intense attention and the wide usage of the term does not imply a universally shared perception and understanding.

Whilst there has been much progress on MSIs globally, as a local and global society, as yet we have not entirely been able to crack the code of multistakeholderism. MSIs have been both praised and criticized for several reasons, though recently there have been shriller voices towards



latter. The hopes and excitement around the potential of MSIs, generated during the incubation phase, seem to be waning and concerns have been raised around their independence, duplicity, lack of harmonization, costs, impacts, credibility, legitimacy and business models. Emerging scholarly and policy evidence demonstrates significant variations in forms, methods and in the nature of relations amongst the principal and supporting actors, both in procedural rules and results. Such evidence suggests that MSIs are yet to become a coherent institutional form, and the common tendency would be to judge MSIs as a bandwagon or a buzzword. Such a response may be tantamount to prematurely wishing away the possibilities and potential offered by multistakeholderism and the MSIs.

Indeed, it is not easy to design and manage MSIs, particularly when their legitimacy and authority is perennially in question and the basis for participation and adherence to the frameworks and rules remain voluntary and discretionary, driven mostly by the principles and logics of the market. However, it would be possible to address the democratic deficit and protect the deliberative dimensions of MSIs. To enhance the credibility and legitimacy of MSIs, almost from their inception, analysts argued for accountability, transparency, embeddedness, inclusivity and parity across geopolitical boundaries and for the harnessing of

differences in cultures, perspectives and styles of working for MSIs. Also, and more importantly, whilst capacities in designing and running MSIs have been built in developed countries over the past few decades, in developing countries and in the rising powers, human and institutional capacities and experience around MSIs need upgrading, to secure their participation and buy-in.

Given the wide variety of complexity, issues and transformations required across geopolitical boundaries, it may not be possible, or even desirable, to have a standard or a perfect design for MSIs. Perhaps an approach to dealing with organizational pathologies within the so-called MSIs is required. Building strong ties, collaborations and social capital amongst the designers, shapers, adherers, supporters and newly emerging stakeholders of MSIs (particularly in less experienced markets) may ensure better adherence to collectively developed procedural rules. These actions may yield a better future for MSIs and the desired results for transformational change.

We wish all our new members a very warm welcome.

We invite you to engage with the CSSI community through our website at www.cssicommunity.org and on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ARSPinternational/>.

Previous issues of the ARSP are available for download at <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/glbj/arsp>



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