PEP
Promoting Effective Partnering

the partnering initiative

COLLABORATION FOR THE SDGs:

Exploring the support system for effective partnering



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About this report

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Executive Summary

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly acknowledge the interconnectedness of the prosperity of business, the prosperity of society and the prosperity of the environment. They represent a fundamental shift in approach, naming all societal sectors as key development actors, and requiring an unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration among civil society, business, government, NGOs, foundations and others for their achievement.

The MDGs were a set of relatively unconnected development targets for which linear development approaches, in the main, were utilised successfully. By their very nature, the SDGs are highly interconnected and require much more systemic and transformational responses.

The necessary level of scale of collaboration required for the SDGs, and the shift in the style of collaboration necessary, requires a concerted and targeted effort to support partnering globally.

Unlike the MDGs, there is less emphasis on single-issue, global partnerships controlled by a formal structure. While global partnerships will continue to play a role, we need a range of different forms of collaboration: including more holistic, multiple-issue partnerships that can address the complexity of interlinked goals at the country or local level.

For collaboration to be mainstreamed, the following will be required:

- At the individual level, people need much greater capacity for partnering. Beyond the competitive instinct, people need a collaborative mindset and skillset.
- Organisations need to be much more outward looking and *institutionally* set up to partner effectively.
- Collaborations need to adhere to a strong process and be set up to good practice standards in order to deliver effectively.
- Mechanisms such as partnership platforms are needed to systematically catalyse and support collaboration.
- At the system level, there needs to be an overall strong enabling environment to support partnering at scale.

While there is already some level of partnering support available to influence these levels, such support is patchy, rapidly-changing and hard to describe. It involves individuals and small organisations, right through to major global entities.

The system of support that can contribute to the five levels above includes six elements:

- Showcasing is about raising awareness, inspiring action, and building understanding of the importance of collaboration for the SDGs.
- Good brokering is about bringing partners together and ensuring that they are operating effectively.
- Training and capacity building for partnering helps to grow the global knowledge and expertise base.
- Bespoke consulting services can help organisations to be effective partners, and can provide partnerships with critical advisory support such as monitoring and evaluation.
- Partnership research helps to ensure that we're learning from the best, applying this experience wherever we can and building the global knowledge base.
- Finally, funding is a critical ingredient to build capacity, support individual partnerships and develop the platform infrastructure.

In each of these areas there are a number of 'macro' activities that can accelerate the building up of the system of support.

The PEP effective partnering website has created a publicly-available database, in pilot form, featuring organisations and initiatives within this support system in order to make them available.

Dave Prescott and Darian Stibbe, The Partnering Initiative

1. Complexity arrives: Collaboration in the SDG era

In September 2015, the UN announced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Effective, multi-stakeholder collaboration among governments, business, NGOs, donors and communities is central to achieving these goals. Such collaboration will be needed at a scale and quality that goes far beyond current efforts.

While goal 17 of the SDGs explicitly talks about a 'global partnership for development', and has a target (17.17) specifically related to multi-stakeholder collaboration, the reality is that all of the goals necessarily require the involvement of, and significant collaboration across, all societal sectors.

Further, the goals are highly interconnected. Water, for example, is an essential component of both health and sanitation and agriculture. This fundamental awareness of interconnections represents a radical difference between the MDGs' 'old style thinking' (in silos) and SDGs' 'new style thinking' (in cross-cutting, intersectoral, interdisciplinary systems). This is illustrated in the table below.

Table 1: MDG vs SDG style thinking around development

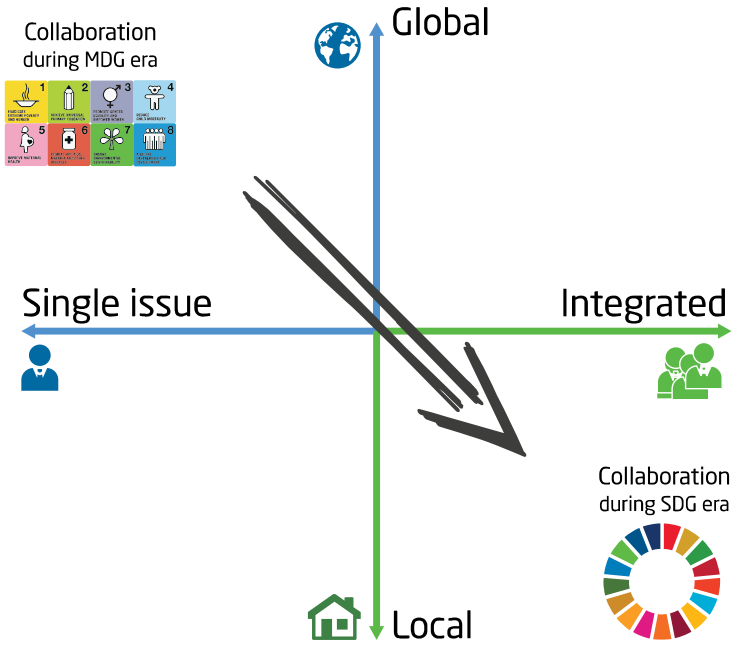
←  MDG-Era	 SDG Era →
← Need to focus on specific issues in specific geographies in order to achieve sufficient concentration of effort and achieve impact	Need for holistic approaches across issues and geographies to tackle systemic challenges →
← Most funding is linked to the achievement of short term outcomes	Longer term investment required for transformational change →
← Requirement to demonstrate impact and low tolerance of risk leads to using familiar linear approaches to achieve development outcomes	Need for innovative approaches with greater long term potential to tackle complexity but greater risk of failure →
← Development community used to more rigid, strong-tied structures	Need for agile, flexible, loose-tied structures →
← Top-down planning, 'development by design' approach	Emergent planning based on the coalescing of interests and local resources around particular issues →
← Proprietorial knowledge and expertise	Open source knowledge and expertise →
← Development community accountable for delivery	Everyone accountable for delivery →

Collaborative action at scale does not necessarily imply significantly larger individual partnerships, covering more geographies, with more funding. The opposite may be closer to the truth. Achieving impact at scale may require many smaller collaborative initiatives, utilising local resources more effectively to achieve locally-defined priorities, and working in informal or formal co-operative ways with related initiatives.

The SDGs call for more integrated, collaborative solutions applied locally. Collaboration in the MDG era was highly focussed more strongly at the global level, on single issues. Local contextual factors were not always fully considered and the SDGs call for more holistic solutions integrated across related issues.

As a very broad brush statement: the focus of collaborative activities and the flow of partnering knowledge and expertise needs to move much more from the top left quadrant of the diagram below and into the bottom right quadrant.

Figure 1: How the focus of collaboration must change for the SDG era



While global partnership initiatives have played, and will continue to play an important role in both motivating action and sharing good practice, their role may change, as the need for context-specific responses becomes more urgent.

For example, the 2030 Water Resources Group and the Building Efficiency Accelerator are two interesting global initiatives examples which may show a way forward. They describe themselves as 'accelerators': global partnerships which harness commitments and good practice, and catalyse locally-appropriate forms of implementation that ensure ownership and action. The World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture initiative operates in a similar way.

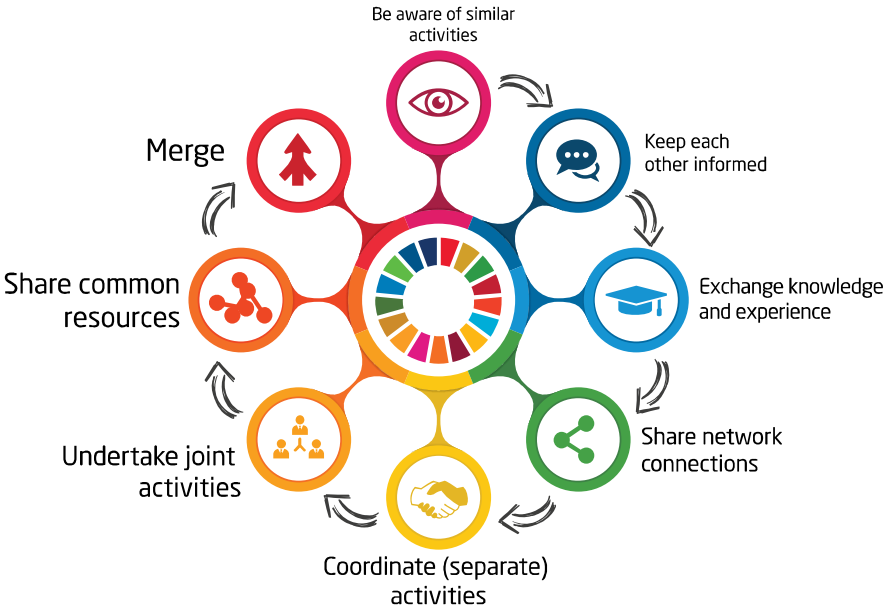
Focussing more on local context can enable a shift away from the abstract and towards the concrete and specific. For example, the water-food-energy nexus is perhaps best be explored around particular water basins (see for example, the work of the Nile Project, which brings together music and hydropolitics in a highly innovative way). In other cases, cities might provide the most appropriate scale for an effective collaborative response.

As well as operating at a more local scale, the interconnectedness of the goals and the need for more holistic, system approaches, it is necessary to shift away from a single issue approaches towards a multiple issue approaches. This better reflects the SDGs' composition as an integrated network of targets rather than a static list. For example, Every Woman Every Child's (EWEC) new global strategy – which calls for a more integrated approach that goes beyond the health sector - has been produced following the finding that up to 50% of health gains come from investment in other sectors such as education, nutrition and water and sanitation.

EWEC and other similarly-structured initiatives (such as Scaling Up Nutrition or the New Vision for Agriculture) place a premium on loose interactions (so called 'soft-ties') between networks of similar local initiatives, rather than attempting a centralised, top-down, command-and-control strategy. This characteristic of initiatives that come together when needed may be another hallmark of complex partnering.

Figure 2 shows that there are many options for integration between similar collaborative efforts, ranging from informal dialogue right through to formal mergers. Understanding when to integrate, to what extent, and for how long, will be a critical factor in the success of SDG-era partnering.

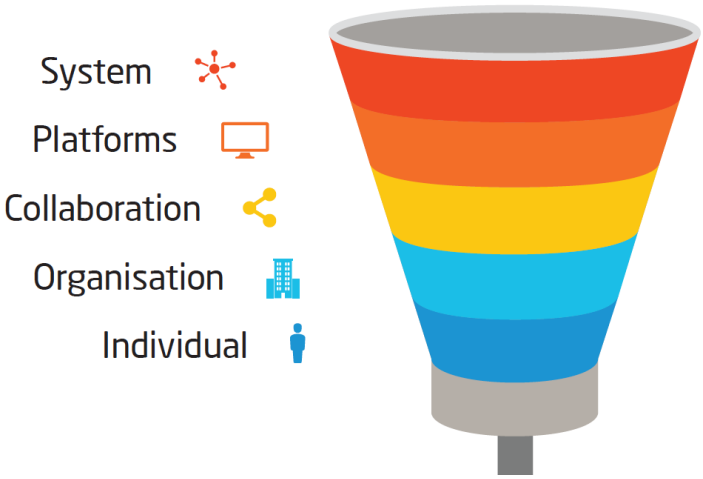
Figure 2: Increasing level of interconnection and potential for value creation



2. The multiple engagement levels of partnering

Complex partnering requires awareness and engagement beyond the level of a specific collaborative project. In fact, experience suggests that it is necessary to engage at five different levels, in order to create the step-change in scale and impact required by the SDGs:

Figure 3: Five levels of engagement required for partnering at scale



While many efforts to support partnering focus on the central level (collaboration), it is important to address – or at least be aware of the existence of - the multiple levels. A collective and coordinated approach is necessary to enable collaboration at the scale required by the SDGs.

The table overleaf describes each of these five levels in more detail. It also shows that similar patterns appear, and similar interventions are needed, across all five levels of engagement. Perhaps most important are partnering mindsets and skillsets; or, the ability to respond with skill to complexity.

Table 2: Five levels of engagement on partnering for the SDGs, and options for improvement

Level	Description	What's needed
Individual	People need partnering competencies and a conducive 'interior condition'[1] in order to work collaboratively with others. This includes creating a collaborative mindset, developing the understanding of other types of organisation and sectors, the importance of relationship-building and technical partnering knowledge and skills.	The best way to build individual capacity to collaborate is to collaborate. This should be undertaken as part of a facilitated network in order to common mistakes and learn from experience. Formal partnering training also has a role to play.
Organisation	Organisations across all sectors (government, business, civil society, academia, and informal networks) need to be 'fit for partnering'[2] and to develop a commitment to shared value[3]. This includes the right leadership and strategy, systems and processes, incentive structures, skills and a pro-partnering organisational culture.	*Organisations should be able to assess the degree to which they are institutionally 'fit for partnering' and take steps to adjust and continually improve, contributing to the common body of knowledge as they learn.*
Collaboration	Cooperation between government, business, NGOs and other stakeholders in which they agree to work together, jointly assuming risks and responsibilities, combining their resources and competencies to achieve common partnership goals, and thereby achieving both business and development benefits more efficiently and effectively[4].	New partnerships should be established in ways that enable rapid learning from similar experiences that have gone before, to avoid previous mistakes and 'reinventing the wheel', and to contribute to continual improvement in partnering practice. In order to do this, shared language, understanding of the partnering process, accessible tools, and more effective forms of monitoring and learning.
Platform	Facilities, hubs, centres, accelerators or structures with the aim of catalysing a step-change in quality, quantity and effectiveness of partnering approaches. In-country platforms (operating at both national and sub-national levels) as well as regional platforms, will play an increasingly important role in improving partnering effectiveness. These independent platforms, which can either be created anew or wherever possible be adapted from existing entities, can be networked globally for shared learning and support.	The development of good practice guidelines could optimise the set-up and operation of partnering platforms, stronger connections can be built between existing platforms, and new platforms can be catalysed where gaps exist.
System	The 'partnering space' within which individuals, organisations, partnerships and platforms operate (at local, national, regional and global levels). This comprises the sum total of collaborative efforts towards the SDGs, plus the public policy frameworks in place to support these efforts.	Better understanding of the partnering space can inform policy, address gaps and remove blockages, and seek opportunities to improve flows of partnering knowledge and expertise across different levels of engagement, themes and locations. System mapping and data visualisation can facilitate these interventions.

3. Sketching the partnering support system

Having established that partnering in the SDG era requires a degree of complexity, and that there are multiple levels of engagement, this section now explores what support is available to deliver the necessary engagement.

The notion of a 'partnering support system' is introduced in this section. It describes the multiple informal and formal ways in which partnering knowledge and expertise is shared in order to catalyse new forms of collaboration and to support and learn from existing forms of collaboration.

This support system is unofficial, it is rapidly emerging, and it is difficult to map. It comprises both those working within ongoing partnering activities, as well as third parties seeking to provide assistance.

While there are good examples of collaboration around the world that are starting to achieve real impact, the ambition of the SDGs calls for a far more concerted and active effort across the multiple levels of engagement identified in the previous section. Dedicated and effective partnering support is needed.

> ***Working definition of the 'partnering support system'***
>
> *The set of actors of all kinds (whether organisations, initiatives, platforms, individuals etc.) that together makes accessible the necessary support, catalysis and capacity building at the appropriate level to drive widespread development of collaborative action.*

The following section attempts to bring together in one place a sense of the variety of initiatives and programmes out there that, while currently mainly operating independently, could potentially be more effective with an appropriate level of coordination, exchange and shared language and standards. The paper also seeks to identify the major gaps in the support system to help partnering organisations and initiatives begin to respond to the needs.

Within the partnering support system, we suggest six distinct roles that can be played by support organisations:

- showcasing;
- brokering;
- training;
- consulting;
- research and learning;
- funding.

These six types of support, described below, apply at the multiple levels shown in figure 3 (individual, organisational, etc.).

Partnering support can come a huge variety of sources, ranging from consulting firms providing traditional advisory services, through to informal and frank exchanges between practicing individuals within ongoing collaborative efforts. In some cases, the support may come in the form of self-help tools or guidebook, though experience suggests that such resources are best used in the company of an experienced practitioner.

Generally speaking, partnering support which is vertically integrated (i.e. national / local platforms operating with the support of a global hub) can be most effective. See also Figure 1 of this report. This is because:

a) Support can be given in the same location where partnerships are actually implemented and so can be much more context-specific, based on local priorities and the realities on the ground, and

1 See https://www.presencing.com/theoryu

2 See thepartneringinitiative.org for further information on what it means to be fit for partnering.

3 See http://sharedvalue.org/about-shared-value

4 This working definition is taken from 'Unleashing the power of business: A practical roadmap to systematically engage business as a partner in development' (TPI, 2015)

designed around the interests and available resources of the partners - i.e. they can create more appropriate, implementable solutions, which maximise value from what's there;

b) There are benefits from being integrated into the bigger system - using international or national policy frameworks, access to good practice knowledge and experience of others, sharing of material / capacity building etc.; connection with financial flows (whether donor funding or other forms of investment); and
c) Valuable insights and knowledge can be passed across the rest of the support system to inform others.

For now, however, such 'vertically integrated' support is rarely available or accessible. An initial, searchable version of this 'support system', together with example organisations, is being piloted as part of the PEP website at www.effectivepartnering.org.

Elements of the support system

Showcasing

Showcasing partnerships aims to raise awareness and build understanding of the role of collaboration for the SDGs. There is often a focus on the private sector.

They sometimes create pledges or principles against which organisations hold themselves accountable for delivery, and may play an advocacy role for example through awards, recognition or lobbying.

On the whole major showcasing / pledging initiatives tend to operate at the global level. A number come from the UN) but also from business organisations.

For example, one of the Global Partnerships, Every Woman Every Child, is a multi-stakeholder movement to implement the United Nations' Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health. It seeks commitments of all kinds from all sectors of society, which it showcases and tracks through its website. The UN and the US Council for International Business both have online showcases of partnerships for the SDGs.

At best, global initiatives set aspirational goals, they create legitimacy for action and they help with both gap analysis and problem definition. However, pledging initiatives commonly suffer from the challenge of how to track and report on the pledges that are made on action towards the SDGs.

While companies and other organisations might receive publicity for announcing action, it is then difficult to monitor to ensure that that action took place and the impact that it had.

Showcasing of initiatives tend to suffer both from the challenge of keeping databases up-to-date but also the fact that data is spread around a great number of competing databases, so there is no single place to go to view all information on a topic.

Another challenge with global initiatives is that, after a certain size, they sometimes fall into 'business as usual' modes of operating and lose the innovation that made them effective in the first place.

Potential 'macro' interventions to strengthen support

1. Work with pledging initiatives to design common procedures for reporting on implementation of announced action;
2. Create common interoperability standards for databases of partnerships to allow the aggregation and sharing of data, and common approaches to keeping the data up to date
3. Developing and disseminating quality standards for partnering and creating assessment systems to recognise and celebrate quality partnering.

Brokering

There is a significant and often overlooked role to be played in bringing partnerships together and ensuring that they are operating effectively. This brokering role is often played by individuals within a partnership, but it can also be provided by external actors – either experienced individuals, or intermediary platforms.

Most major business organisations with a sustainability focus play a significant role in brokering collaboration around topics of interest to their members, either as business coalitions or multi-stakeholder partnerships. For example, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development runs global programmes across a range of value chain and sustainability issues, usually with action on the ground taken in collaboration with a range of partners.

There is also a growing understanding within and action by UN agencies (most notably UNDP) of the role they can play as a catalyst or broker of partnerships, even if they themselves are not partners. World Vision is an example of a major NGO that has understood the essential need for collaboration and is acting as a broker of partnerships, mainly at the local level.

A number of platforms specifically designed to catalyse and support partnership action are being set up across multiple geographies and issues. Such platforms are likely to be most successful when the issue resonates sufficiently with the participant organisations both in terms of topic and geography - i.e. there is sufficient *specificity of interest* with the organisations - and where there is sufficient *commonality of interest* across the organisations that they can coalesce around the issue to explore and take forward collaborative action.

Much more geographically extensive than partnership platforms are mechanisms for public-private dialogue (PPD). PPD provides an opportunity for discussion between government and business, usually around what government can do to create a more supportive business environment, although in a number of cases (e.g. Rwanda), this has widened across development issues.

Platforms operating purely at global level may largely focus on issues of global advocacy and/or knowledge exchange rather than specific action in country. Where more direct action is desired and there is a mismatch between the levels at which a partnership is agreed, and at which it is actually implemented, there is a risk of 'Davos Syndrome[5]'.

This describes problems in implementation that come about for two reasons: firstly, without the most relevant people in the room, the local context may not have been sufficiently taken into account and so the agreed partnership solution may not be the most appropriate; and secondly, the local representatives of the organisations - those actually expected to contribute their time and other resources on the ground - may not have the same incentives and sufficient interest in taking the partnership forward.

While dialogue is of course a pre-cursor to collaborative action, the objective of PPD can be policy reform rather than partnership. Nevertheless, these existing mechanisms potentially provide an excellent substrate on which to build partnership platforms.

Platforms that can systematically catalyse partnerships are few and far between, particularly at the country level. In an ideal world, there would be such mechanisms (or alternatives providing the functionality) in place across all SDGs (in a horizontally integrated way) and at all geographies from global to village level. Of course, it is not realistic to expect such a comprehensive system to be put in place, but this is the aspirational ideal.

One area where the creation of national and sub-national platform would create particular value is to be provide to ensure vertical integration between global partnership efforts and action on the ground. Further, while the global partnerships struggle for horizontal integration at the global level, it is the country level where there is real potential to develop more holistic / integrated approaches through, at minimum, coordination of efforts.

The World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture initiative is structured in this way, and the methodology has been published in a recent guidebook[6]. The Partnering Initiative and World Vision have also jointly produced a report which attempts to map out the territory of this critical part of the partnering infrastructure[7].

Potential 'macro' interventions

- Greater recognition among decision-makers of the often invisible work done by platforms, intermediaries and brokers as critical 'glue' for partnering efforts
- Development of good practice guidelines for the development of in-country platforms, to promote consistency and better sharing of knowledge and expertise

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[5] The term 'Davos Syndrome', coined by Darian Stibbe, describes how agreements to partner made by CEOs and Executive Directors at meetings such as the World Economic Forum in Davos often suffer problems when it comes to actual implementation by the people on the ground where there may not be sufficient buy-in

[6] See 'Building partnerships for sustainable agriculture and food security: A guide to country-led action' (2016), World Economic Forum.

[7] See 'Delivering on the promise: In-country multi-stakeholder platforms to catalyse collaboration and partnerships for Agenda 2030' (2016), The Partnering Initiative and World Vision.

Consulting

Expert, neutral support that can take nascent partnerships through an effective process and instil good partnering practice will both speed up partnership creation and ultimately result in greater value creation and impact.

There are a growing number of consultants – independent brokers, niche consultancies / not-for-profits, and specialists within major business or development consultancies. The partnering specialist support organisations include three of the PEP Partners (CLI, TPI and PiP); Global CAD - a global network of experts promoting partnerships to find innovative and sustainable solutions to global challenges; and Be-linked, operating mainly in francophone countries among many others. Notable specialists in consultancies include Accenture Development Partnerships, Monitor Deloitte, Boston Consultant Group, KPMG among others.

Several of the specialist partnering organisations mentioned above already operate in an informal alliance, working together wherever valuable, passing on opportunities to the organisation with the most appropriate skills and experience.

Closely connected to cross-sectoral partnering, FSG's Shared Value Initiative has created a Consulting Affiliate Network, a consortium of independent consulting firms around the world that are trained to provide shared value consulting services to corporations, governments and civil society organisations.

There is limited recognition of the potential value of cross-sector collaboration, there is wide variation in use of terminology and understanding of partnering, there is a lack of clarity on partnering needs and effective solutions, and there are no universally-agreed quality controls over consulting service offerings (or self-help partnering tools). This all makes it difficult for a potential collaborative initiative to identify effective consulting support.

Also while the number of consultants is growing, in particular with one or two-person niche consultants, in most countries there is not a sufficient supply of affordable, expert support available for partnering. At the same time, there is in general a lack of understanding of, and therefore demand for, expert external support, with help often being sought only once partnerships have gone wrong rather than at the beginning when it can make the most difference.

Potential 'macro' interventions to strengthen support

- A campaign to build understanding of the value of expert partnering support
- A public registry of support available to help make it more easily accessible
- An agreed approach to quality recognition – potentially through common professional certification

Training and capacity building

Many universities and executive education providers are revisiting the competencies required to do business in the future, and are incorporating many partnering (and corporate responsibility) concepts into their mainstream courses.

The number of organisations providing training and capacity building in cross-sector collaboration is surprisingly limited. Those known to have trained significant numbers (in the low thousands) include the PEP partners: the Partnership Brokers Association, Collective Leadership Institute and The Partnering Initiative – with different foci. The Netherlands-based training and consultancy organisation, MDF, also offers courses in 'Making partnerships work'.

There are also dedicated university courses in Singapore and in Indonesia. While clearly not a dedicated capacity-building organisations, it is worth noting that World Vision has trained over 1000 of its own staff in partnering at the local level, partly based on PBA material.

Course are not distributed evenly around the world, with the majority taking place in Europe. Given the geography and the international cost, they are not widely accessible to the majority of the planet.

It is difficult to judge the degree to which partnering is included within the curricular of relevant university degree and other courses. It appears to be a regular topic in courses related to sustainability, such as the University of Cambridge's Masters in Sustainability Leadership or Forum for the Future's Leadership in Sustainable Development Masters. However, at least in the experience of the writers of this report, it does not seem to have been widely adopted in more mainstream courses, for example around public policy or business administration.

There has been some early success in developing skills and competencies for partnering, with some innovations demonstrating the value of independent and dedicated learning programmes. In order to instil collaborative mindsets in a systematic way it will be necessary to rethink how to understand different levels of attainment, integrate partnering into existing approaches wherever appropriate, and create demand among potential partners. In addition, training, mentoring, coaching, peer-to-peer exchange could all be made far more available than is currently the case. Finally, the best way to build capacity to partner is to partner – and to do so with experienced support in order to avoid making the same mistakes as others.

Macro interventions

- TPI is developing the Partnering Academy, a consortium of international NGOs and training providers with an agenda to make blended learning on partnering accessible. This includes the development of online training as well as cascading high quality, affordable training down to the country level.
- A campaign could help to spread partnering as a key competence into existing relevant courses. The creation of standard open source partnering material could help institutions to integrate it.

Research and learning

Many organisations are working to identify what works, and what doesn't in partnering, and to codify and share this learning – both for its own sake, and to meet funding requirements.

Along with the PEP Partners, there are a variety of organisations operating globally that – to a greater or lesser extent – draw out learning from collaboration including Harvard CSRI, FSG, Business Fights Poverty, Fundacao Getulio Vargas, ESAMI, Devex Impact, and ODI.

Specifically on monitoring and evaluation, all the PEP partners have developed their own approaches and are actively supporting a range of partnerships' M&E activities. The growing number of consultants mentioned above in many case provide partnership review and evaluation services, and many of the organisations providing 'traditional' development evaluation (mainly around impact) are either working with partnership specialists or developing competencies on the partnership efficiency / health check side.

The Partnership Resource Centre works collaboratively with a number of universities around the world, and the Annual Review of Social Partnerships brings together academics both through an annual conference and around its eponymous publication.

Generally speaking, there is a lack of effective measurement around collaboration, though within academic circles there is plenty of expertise that could be unlocked and put into practice.

There is currently no 'standard' approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning (not least because it is so difficult) and few organisations have extensive experience of monitoring and evaluating partnerships. Anecdotally, most partnering initiatives do not build in M&E as part of their implementation, and few have learning mechanisms built in.

Some of the greatest innovation – and therefore learning – happens unobserved and unrecorded, and sometimes the process of 'capturing learning' can render it useless. This is because the activities of an initiative may become too exposed, or some subtlety of delivery or personal chemistry is lost in translation. The most effective learning on partnering may therefore also the most problematic to share.

Macro interventions

- Creation of, or building up of, a network of academic and research institutions that support partnership learning and measuring in country while exchanging experiences and lessons-learned globally.
- Encouragement for partnerships to build MEL (monitoring, evaluation and learning) into their programme plans as part of good practice.
- Further development and testing of M&E approaches that can then be spread across research organisations and M&E specialists.

Funding

There is a general trend across donors to much more strongly support public private partnerships for development either in specific issues (e.g. the Netherlands supporting water and agriculture) or more generally (USAID's Global Development Alliance and Germany's PPP support).

In addition, donors such as the UK's DFID, Germany and the Netherlands are strongly supporting inclusive business which, in most cases, are based on cross-sector collaboration.

There is also a trend among some donors towards the funding of NGO coalitions – rather than individuals NGOs – in delivering development programmes. The jury is out as to whether these forms of 'enforced' partnership have led to the genuine innovation that partnering can bring.

Many of the global partnerships and other multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative and Cities Alliance are supported by multiple donors through trust funds. Individual governments also support specific initiatives of interest to them, for example Sweden with the Global Child Forum and Denmark with the Global Green Growth Forum.

A number of the major foundations including Bill and Melinda Gates, Rockefeller, Citi and Ford, many of which have come out of companies, understand the role of business in development and support a variety of partnership programmes and multi-stakeholder initiatives.

Specifically related to SDG implementation, the SDG Fund supports the development of partnerships at country level involving the United Nations.

It remains difficult to get funding that cuts across different development areas. While there is clearly a trend towards supporting public private collaboration, within many donors it tends to be through separate funding facilities rather than being mainstreamed across departments as one essential tool in the armoury.

There is a huge need to build and fund the support structures, platforms, dialogue spaces, back bone organisations etc. that can help to catalyse partnerships. This investment can unlock resources from all sectors of society on development challenges. One bright spot comes from the US-based organisation 'Grantmakers for Effective Organisations'[8], which is encouraging 'systems grantmaking', based on collaborative funding mechanisms.

Macro interventions

- Build donors' (of all kinds) understanding of how funds can be used to create longer term, sustainable impact through catalysing collaborative action.
- Support donors in integrating the partnering approach (particularly with the private sector) across their whole set of objectives, rather than have PPP as a separate area.

Example organisations

The following entities offer partnering support, often playing several of the six roles identified in this section of the report. An effort is underway through the PEP website to create an open database of partnering support organisations using this categorisation, including brief organisational profiles along the lines below and an indication of which support role(s) each organisation performs.

World Economic Forum

The main cross-issue, cross-sector organisation operating globally is the World Economic Forum (WEF). WEF is the 'International Organisation for Public-Private Cooperation' and brings 'together the world's foremost CEOs, heads of state, ministers and policy-makers, experts and academics, international organizations, youth, technology innovators and representatives of civil society in an impartial space with the aim of driving positive change'.

WEF takes deep dives into a number of key global challenges, driving action down to the regional and country level. One of their most successful programmes, and one of the best examples of vertically integrated platforms currently in operation, is the New Vision for Agriculture.

At the global level, this programme facilitates leadership commitment to action through dialogue, commitment building and collaboration among multiple stakeholders, and promotes innovation and good practice by facilitating exchange of experience among stakeholders and regions. Through its Grow Africa and Grow Asia platforms, it supports transformation in agricultural systems by catalysing and supporting action-oriented, multi-stakeholder partnerships at regional and country levels.

[8] See for example GEO's Systems grantmaking resource guide 2016.

Scaling Up Nutrition

One of the more well-established integrated platforms for partnership is the SUN (Scaling Up Nutrition) initiative, a 'global movement led by countries'. Operating in 56 countries it supports advocacy and garners commitments from all sectors in country. In a number of countries it plays an active role in brokering collaboration among the sectors for transformational action. Along with vertical integration, it is also seeking much strong horizontal integration, looking to work more strongly with other related initiatives such as the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

UN Global Compact

The UN Global Compact, the 'world's largest corporate sustainability initiative', is a 'call to companies to align strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and take actions that advance societal goals'. While the focus has been mainly on the former, in its new strategy, the organisation is looking towards its array of Global Compact Local Networks to play a significant role in brokering collaboration between its members and the United Nations System.

This approach was successfully prototyped with the support of The Partnering Initiative in Colombia, Brazil, India and Kenya, and a programme put in place to build the capacity of local networks to play the role. While there is serious potential in the UNGC to become a network of brokering platforms, capabilities and resources within the local networks are mixed and some are in a much better position than others to play that role.

In addition, the UNGC runs a number of global programmes, such as the CEO Water Challenge that support collaboration on particular topics, as well as an online partner matchmaking service across a variety of issues.

4. What next

This report has begun to sketch out how partnering may happen at scale in order to help achieve the SDGs. Further work is required to test the frameworks set out in this report, assess their usefulness in practice, and refine and develop them as necessary.

Some of the next steps may include:

- Further testing of the main concepts in the report to ensure coherence and usefulness to practitioners
- Testing of the suggested 'macro interventions' for each of the six outlined areas of the support system
- Better connection between different organisations and individuals within the support system to share knowledge and expertise
- Better connection between knowledge and expertise supply and demand, including an expanded, open source, database of the partnering support system

Appendix 1: Acknowledgements and approach

This report has been produced by The Partnering Initiative for the PEP Facility, with funding from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The inputs for this piece of work are as follows:

- Desk research (see 'further reading' section)
- A series of semi-structured interviews with leaders in the field (the list of interviewees is provided below)
- A version of this five-level integrated framework was presented at the PEP Co-Design Lab at The Hague in January 2016, with informal feedback given.
- A 2014 report produced by TPI for the GPEDC, co-written by Dave Prescott and Darian Stibbe, entitled 'Unleashing the power of business: A practical roadmap to systematically scale up the engagement of business as a partner in development'. The report involved interviews with forty people from all sectors, four roundtables held around the world, a global survey and online discussion events.

Contributors

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All efforts have been made to corroborate the views expressed in this report. Final responsibility for the content lies with the report's authors, Darian Stibbe and Dave Prescott.

Appendix 2: Further reading

Building partnerships for sustainable agriculture and food security: A guide to country level action, (January 2016), World Economic Forum

Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Interim reference guide to UN country teams (October 2015), UNDG

Overview of organisations working on partnership (2011), Partnerships Resource Centre (internal working document)

Partnerships for Sustainable Development Goals: A legacy review towards realising the 2030 Agenda (December 2015), UN-DESA

Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (September 2015), United Nations

The role of the private sector in development effectiveness: Common components for success in future partnerships (November 2015), GPEDC

The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health: In support of Every Woman, Every Child: Strategic Plan 2016-2020 (November 2015), PMNCH

Business and the United Nations: Working together towards the sustainable development goals: A framework for action (2015) Business Fights Poverty and Harvard CSRI

Turning ambition into reality: Platforms and partnerships for delivering agenda 2030 (2016) New York University Center for International Co-operation

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