



Business Partners for Development

Endearing Myths, Enduring Truths

Enabling Partnerships
Between Business,
Civil Society and
the Public Sector



*Business Partners for Development is
a project-based initiative designed to
study, support and promote strategic
examples of partnerships involving
business, government and civil society
working together for the development
of communities around the world.*

Business Partners for Development

The Proposition

Business Partners for Development (BPD) was established to study, support, and promote strategic examples of partnerships involving business, civil society, and government working together in and for communities around the world.

BPD's core purpose has been to explore the proposition that such trisector partnerships:

- Provide development and business benefits
- Can be much more widely used throughout the world
- Can be scaled up to national and regional levels

BPD in Action

BPD has been a project-based *learning initiative*. Its engagement in, and support and development of, specific partnerships has intended to serve the dual purposes of:

- **Promoting** their effectiveness
- **Learning and communicating** what role different sectors in society can play in a collaborative approach to sustainable development

From 1998 to the present, more than 120 companies, civil society organizations, and government agencies have participated in 30 different 'focus projects' and programmes in 20 countries. These activities were selected by the four 'BPD Clusters'. The Clusters were chosen partly along industry lines (oil, gas, and mining and water and sanitation) and partly based on themes (youth development and road safety). Each Cluster's activities have been managed through its secretariat, housed within the nongovernmental organization (NGO) that helped convene that Cluster.

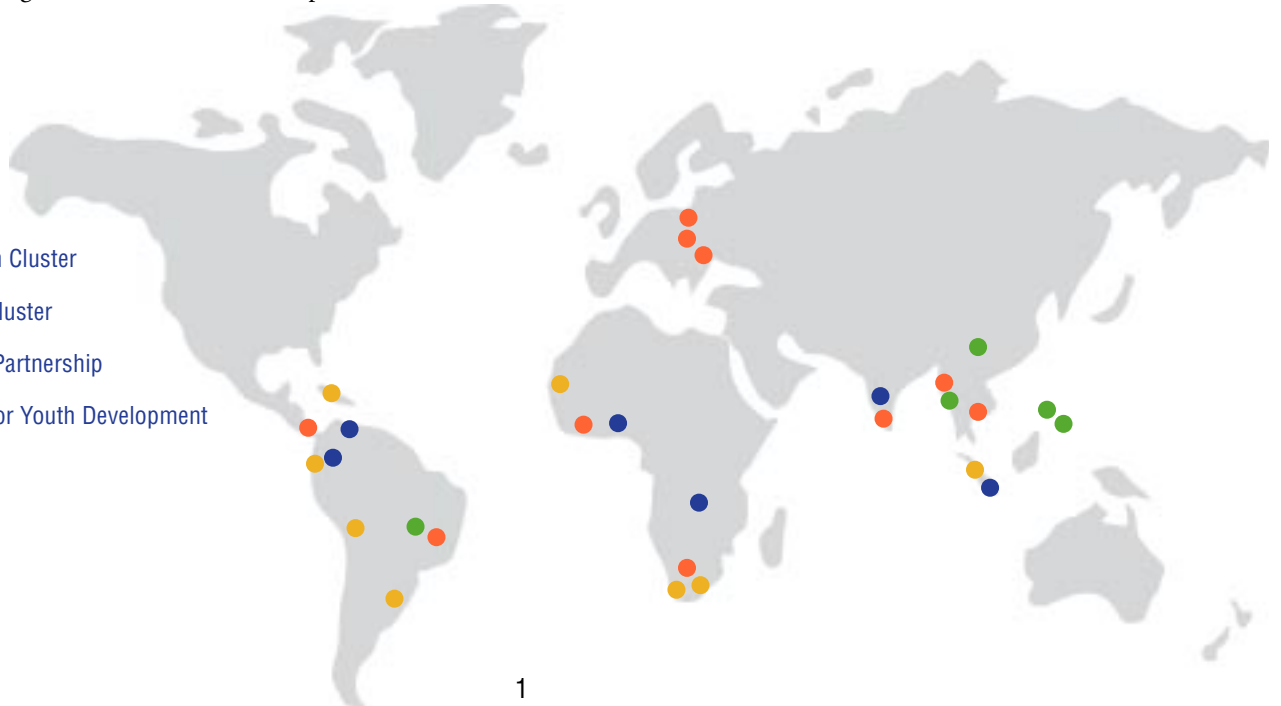
BPD's Three Phases

PHASE ONE was completed in 1998/1999 and focused on building the partner network and Clusters, and identifying and initiating the focus projects.

PHASE TWO is on-going until December 2001, focusing on implementing the Cluster work plans. The 30 focus projects and programmes across BPD have an aggregated budget of U.S.\$47.6 million. By the end of 2001, U.S.\$11.2 million of this will have been spent on delivering partnership improvements, research, knowledge generation, and administration.

PHASE THREE is running concurrently with the final year of Phase Two, and will focus on systematising and communicating the learning gained across BPD to encourage its effective application in the further development of partnership approaches.

- Water and Sanitation Cluster
- Natural Resources Cluster
- Global Road Safety Partnership
- Global Partnership for Youth Development





Phase Three BPD-Wide Learning

THIS DOCUMENT: a preview of the emerging lessons across BPD.

NOVEMBER 2001: a review of BPD's lessons based on evidence from its focus projects and programmes.

JUNE 2002: an evaluation of the effectiveness of BPD in addressing its mission.

This Preview

This *Preview* is the first of three BPD-wide communication initiatives in Phase Three. It has been based on interviews with the Cluster coordinators and a review of documentation. It therefore provides an initial view of, and insights into, the lessons emerging across BPD's four Clusters:

- The practical rationale for trisector partnerships
- The process of partnership development and partnering
- Key success factors for business, civil society, and governments to achieve mutual gains from working in partnership
- The emerging costs and benefits of trisector partnerships as vehicles to manage and promote sustainable development
- How to recognise when a trisector partnership can be the right approach

A second BPD-wide report during this final phase will offer more in-depth analysis of lessons learned, including those about BPD as a whole as well as the specific partnerships on which the Preview has focused. There will also be an external evaluation of BPD to offer additional insights.

The Preview can also be viewed at BPD's website, where you will find links to Cluster specific lessons and more detailed information about the individual focus projects and programmes presented in this report: www.bpdweb.org/krg/

BPD'S FOUR CLUSTERS

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: Partners come together to strengthen and scale up best practices in youth development, including education, vocational training, information technology, tourism and improving the workplace.

Co-Convenors: The Kellogg Company, the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and the World Bank Group.

GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP: Partners work to reduce deaths, injuries, disabilities and associated social costs of road accidents through partnerships that promote collaboration and coordination of road safety activities.

Co-convenors: the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the World Bank Group.

NATURAL RESOURCES CLUSTER: Partners work to develop approaches that optimise development benefits to local communities, while they mitigate investment risk to oil, gas and mining companies.

Co-convenors: BP, WMC Resources Ltd, CARE International and the World Bank Group.

WATER AND SANITATION CLUSTER: Partners develop sustainable mechanisms to provide responsive and affordable water services to the urban poor.

Co-convenors: Générale des Eaux (Vivendi), WaterAid and the World Bank Group.

Tri-Sector Partnerships

The Age of Partnerships

Risks and opportunities in many developing and transition countries have become more complex, volatile, and extreme. Efficiently overcoming risks, building new bases of legitimacy, and taking advantage of latent opportunities are often beyond the reach of individual organisations. Increasingly, the preferred route is to 'stretch' competencies and capacities by linking the technical specialisations, networks, and resources of diverse organisations.

Trisector partnerships, involving business, civil society organisations, and government agencies, are amongst the more complex partnerships. They pose particular challenges, because they seek to draw together often very diverse interests, perspectives, and organisational cultures. However, they also offer significant potential gains if this diversity can be effectively focused and operationalised.

BPD's Diverse Experience

BPD partnerships are not well-defined development projects that begin and end at the will of one organisation. The 30 projects were selected because of their diversity. They are at very different stages of development, and have two different types of relationships with BPD:

- *Partnerships formed through BPD:* these range from the work of the Global Road Safety Partnership that involved setting up an entirely new NGO called 'GRSP Ghana', to secure the effective transfer of internationally available information and knowledge to Ghanaian organisations – through to the work of the Global Youth Development Programme, which facilitates the creation of the 'Out of School Youth Project' in the Philippines, involving the Ayala Foundation, the Children and Youth Foundation in the Philippines, the International Youth Foundation, and the World Bank.
- *Ongoing partnerships drawn into and enhanced through BPD.* The partnership in Dakar, Senegal, between SONES (the public water department), Senegalese des Eaux (a private water operator), ENDA (an international NGO), and local communities was established some years before BPD. BPD has sought to contribute to its effectiveness on the ground, while learning from its experience. The trisector partnership focused around the BP-operated site in Casanare, Colombia, also builds on earlier trisector initiatives in the region, involving community organisations and local and regional public authorities.



Potential Partner Benefits

Achieving social and environmental objectives.

This is a clear objective of governments and civil society organisations, and in some instances one of business, not least because of its emerging relevance to their financial interests.

Increased access to resources.

Accessing financial, technical and managerial resources, which can help to address both common and partner-specific aims.

Better access to information and risk management.

This can help both private and public institutions improve service delivery, and enable them to better manage risk and implement conflict prevention measures.

Building social capital.

Enhancing the quality of key relationships, particularly between partnering organisations and the constituencies they represent or seek to serve.

Growing human capital.

Creating new opportunities for training, placements, mentoring, exchanges, incentive programmes, awareness raising, volunteering and leadership development.

Improved operational efficiency.

Achieving reduced risks and costs, increased process efficiency and better service delivery.

Organizational innovation.

Helping partnering organisations develop new ways of operating to meet complex challenges and opportunities.

More effective products and services.

Governments and NGOs, as well as businesses often provide services. Partnerships can create openings for the more effective design and delivery of such products and services.

Enhanced reputation and credibility.

Building better relations with key stakeholder groups that will benefit directly or indirectly from the partnership.



Why Organisations Engage in Partnerships

BPD partnerships have focused on solving complex and historically intractable social issues. Indeed, BPD's experience highlights that trisector partnerships are often turned to as an option precisely because other approaches have been tried and have failed.

Beyond this general reason, organisations turn to partnership-based solutions for widely differing reasons – especially when they come from different sectors with distinct mandates and diverse organisational orientations, cultures, patterns of accountability, and histories.

The growing power and influence of business in shaping the future makes it particularly important to understand both how BPD has engaged businesses in partnerships for development and their reasons for such engagement. BPD's experience highlights five distinct categories of tangible, direct business benefits from partnership:

- **Risk management.** Although a potential benefit for all businesses in partnerships, BPD experience revealed that the management of risk associated with, for example, civil disruption of business activities, is particularly relevant to the extractive and water and sanitation industries due to their long-term time horizons and the large scale of their fixed investments.
- **Expectations management.** The management of stakeholder expectations, internal as well as external, is a key rationale for business engagement in partnerships. This partly has the underlying aim of managing risk, but beyond that, it also aims to enhance stakeholders' contributions to project success. This is particularly relevant for businesses with large-scale fixed investments, those managing sensitive resources, those operating in relatively poor communities, and those with national and global, as well as local stakeholder management requirements.
- **Market development.** Market development as a rationale for partnership engagement is most relevant for those corporations needing to promote sales in the countries where the partnerships are based, although there is clearly also a public relations dimension linked to international marketing and sales. Through the partnership, businesses are able to strengthen their overall relationships with potential customers, particularly with public sector bodies responsible for procurement. This has proved to be especially relevant for corporations involved in youth development and road safety partnerships, and to a lesser degree, with water and sanitation partnerships.
- **Legal and contract compliance.** Meeting legal contractual obligations is relevant to all businesses. BPD experience highlights the particular importance of this factor for customer-related contract compliance, which concerns businesses involved in the water and sanitation sector. To a lesser degree, it is also relevant for extractive industries where contract compliance covers aspects of community engagement and development.
- **Business process and productivity.** Some partnerships have a direct impact on production and other operational processes, including customer outreach.

Process and productivity gains in BPD were most relevant for the water and sanitation and natural resources-related partnerships generally. These benefits are also being sought in some partnerships in the other two Clusters, such as the youth-related Global Alliance for Workers and Communities where supply-chain productivity gains are expected to result from improvements in workers competencies and overall morale.

The powerful business drivers underpinning trisector partnerships do not reduce the importance of social and ethical values in encouraging greater business engagement on social and environmental issues. Such values are generally personalised, rooted in the commitment of a chief executive, or in champions elsewhere in the organisation. However the effectiveness of these drivers is at risk if they undermine a company's financial performance and will tend to prosper if shown to enhance it. On the other hand, business engagement for purely financial reasons is often seen by other partners as superficial and short term, which may lead to a less-than-successful experience resulting from a failure to gain the trust of key stakeholders. In practice, it is therefore usually a blend of values-based and business drivers that underpin effective business engagement in these issues.

Learning Beyond the Wave

International experimentation over recent years in partnerships has given rise to an emerging body of advice, tools, and techniques to aid partnership makers and participants. However, much of this remains based on limited practical experience, often drawn from a single case or a few examples, and only a small part is based on trisector partnership experience. BPD's breadth and depth therefore provides a unique opportunity to draw broader lessons about partnerships to inform future policy and practice.

As in any innovation wave, only a few core lessons will prove to be robust enough to inform partnerships in the future. BPD's core mission has been to 'learn by doing' and to communicate these lasting lessons. However, such lessons need to be useful as well as true. Lessons like 'partnerships are hard' or 'commitment is an essential ingredient of successful partnerships' are certainly true, but their general and obvious nature mean that they do little to improve practice.

Useful truths about partnerships are those that are:

- **Durable**, beyond the current fashionable wave
- **Quality-orientated**, in offering ways to enhance the capacity to deliver desired development outcomes in replicable and scalable ways

These truths are enduring, not because they hold true in every conceivable situation, but because the available evidence suggests that they will stand the test of time.

The remainder of this document summarises and illustrates in brief the most important *enduring truths* that have emerged at this preliminary stage of BPD's learning, and in so doing seeks to dispel some of the current wave's most *endearing myths*.



Partnership Waves

RIDING THE WAVE

Partnerships are 'in', and BPD is part of this.

MAKING WAVES

BPD is contributing to the development and promotion of the partnership approach.

BEYOND THE WAVE

BPD seeks to define what will survive the crashing of the fashionable and yet less durable elements of partnerships.

Endearing Myths, Enduring Truths...

Ensuring that the Partnership Contains the Right Mix of Partners.

Endearing Myth

Successful partnerships are those where partnering organisations share an interest in addressing common goals.

Enduring Truth

Successful partnerships include the right combination of organisations to secure the necessary institutional mandates and delivery mechanisms to achieve the partnership's objectives and activities.

Partnership design needs to take account of the pattern of potential costs and benefits. For example, the greater the variation and dispersal of potential beneficiaries, the more important the role of public bodies in actively building programmes, as pure market mechanisms or localised collaboration cannot be relied upon to meet agreed objectives. In general therefore, the more diffused the potential costs and benefits, the broader the participation will have to be.

Recognising this, the Global Road Safety Partnership and the Global Partnership for Youth Development have focused on building partnerships at the international and national, rather than site-specific, levels. Road safety – like youth development – is typically underprovided through pure market mechanisms, because its widely dispersed benefits make it an unattractive commercial proposition. Having a significant impact on accident rates requires broad public policies and programmes, such as education and the enforcement of suitable regulation, in addition to location-specific road safety initiatives. However, development programmes to address issues like road safety are also typically underprovided by governments because of institutional weaknesses in grappling with such cross-cutting issues. This is particularly evident where responsibility is dispersed among a number of government agencies and resources are limited. This helps us to understand why public bodies are attracted by trisector partnerships as a means of addressing these broad-based development programmes and goals.

This argument is further supported by BPD experience in the Natural Resources Cluster where site and locality-specific partnerships have been used to mitigate investment risk and the negative social impacts of oil, gas, and mining operations. Such partnerships can bring significant net benefits to the company, employees, and surrounding communities. In these instances, higher-level regional and national initiatives may not be necessary to achieve development and business benefits, as the primary beneficiaries are the business and local community.

Partner's Aims as Partnership Drivers

Endearing Myth

Successful partnerships are primarily shaped around a common or shared long-term vision or aim.

Enduring Truth

Successful partnerships are those shaped around common or shared activities that first and foremost deliver against the individual aims of each partner, particularly where these have been legitimised within the partnership.

It is critically important to establish each partner's individual aims and to design the partnership activities to ensure that these are sufficiently realised. If the partnership does not meet these individual aims through its activities, it will be difficult to secure the partner's continued involvement. For example, securing the engagement of the business partner in joint activities will be easiest where these activities, in practice, assist the business in meeting its contractual obligations, in identifying marketing opportunities, or in managing risks and expectations related to specific sites and contracts.

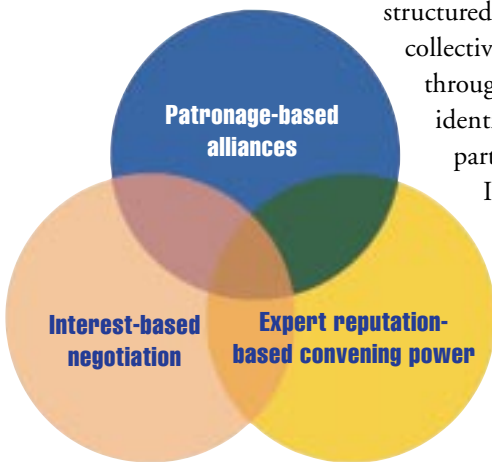
These conditions have proved to be more explicit for the partnerships in the Natural Resources Cluster and the Water and Sanitation Cluster. Konkola Copper Mine plc's commitment to a partnership that aims to develop and implement a local business development programme in the Zambian copperbelt fulfils its contractual obligation established at the time of privatisation, thereby helping to offset social risks associated with community tensions and dislocation arising through retrenchment.

Similarly, the partnership of the Water and Sanitation Services South Africa (a subsidiary of Ondeo, formerly Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux) with an NGO, the Mvula

Trust, was formed with the common aim of improving sustainable water and sanitation services to poorer communities in Northern Province and Eastern Cape in South Africa. This common aim of the Build, Operate, Train, and Transfer (BOTT) Programme of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry certainly frames the partnership's joint activities. However, these activities are possible because they also enable each partner to address its specific interests. For those businesses involved in the consortium formed as a result of the partnership, this meant finding appropriate, sustainable, and cost-effective ways to comply with their contractual obligations to service poor communities and strengthen their bidding position for future contracts in South Africa and elsewhere. The joint activities also enable the Mvula Trust to enhance the quality of the intervention to ensure sustainable availability of water and sanitation services to poorer communities.

The Global Road Safety Partnership's approach to partnership development has been to leverage the personal reputations and expertise of international, senior road safety specialists, particularly in convening national road safety networks in the early stages of operationalising partnerships. The Global Partnership for Youth Development's approach to partnership development has also relied heavily on the engagement of key individuals during the formative stages of the partnerships, drawing particularly on the patronage of national figures with prestige and influence as an aid to partnership convening and resource mobilisation.

The approach to partnership development taken in the Natural Resources Cluster, on the other hand, involved from the outset a more formal process, structured around the principle of building collective commitments to undertake activities through a shared work plan, underpinned by the identification and mutual recognition of both partner-specific and common interests. Individuals' competencies as facilitators and brokers were certainly relevant, but face-to-face (unfacilitated) consensus building was at times equally, if not more important.



Process Method Key To Operational Success

Endearing Myth

Individual champions are the key to successful partnerships, all the more so when diverse organisations are involved with very different aims and world views.

Enduring Truth

Methods for *building* partnerships are relatively interchangeable during their initial stages, but as the partnership is *operationalised*, structured methodologies become relatively more effective than approaches dependent on individual champions.

Fractured Contexts Can Enhance Partnership Potential

Endearing Myth

Partnership potential is greatest when the context ensures that partners are most receptive to, and knowledgeable of, each other.

Enduring Truth

Potential benefits from partnerships are often greatest where social, economic, and political uncertainties have historically constrained cooperation (although if the historical grievances are too great, this can also prevent the partners from coming together without an initial process of conflict resolution).

In 1991 Placer Dome de Venezuela entered into a joint venture with Corporacion Venezolana de Guayana, of the government of Venezuela, to commercially develop gold deposits at a site in Bolivar State, southeastern Venezuela. The joint venture, 'Mineras Las Christinas' (MINCA), operating in the face of a rapidly declining international gold market, suspended construction in July 1999. The suspension meant that community expectations of a socio-economic improvement programme could no longer be met by the company. MINCA therefore faced the possibility of confrontation with the local community and their potential invasion of the concession. It was in this context that a trisector partnership was formed and has delivered real benefits to both the community and the business, for example in the provision of local health services.

Similarly, BPXC in Casanare, Colombia, is a joint venture of BP Oil, Triton Energy, and TFE with the national oil organisation ECOPETROL. The region is subject to the civil conflicts that exist throughout much of the country, endangering the site, infrastructure, and personnel. Government inefficiencies and corruption have restricted the flow of oil-related royalties to benefit the region's communities. Use of a trisector partnership model of social engagement is seen by BP as one important way to improve its license to operate by influencing the flow and allocation of royalty revenues according to the community's interests.

The context of the partnership in Kwa Zulu Natal Province, South Africa, between the municipalities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg, Vivendi Water, the Mvula Trust, Umgeni Water, and the Water Research Commission includes a climate of incredibly high expectations on the part of the communities involved. For poor communities, water has been at the centre of a heated debate about service levels, cost recovery, and other issues in a time of dramatically expanded municipal jurisdictions and their mandate. Within this context, the urgency to explore innovative partnerships clearly increases in order to resolve operational challenges.

International Dimensions Provide Key Experience and Leverage

Endearing Myth

Partnership success is dependent on those most directly involved and with most at stake.

Enduring Truth

Partnership success often depends on individuals and organisations not directly involved that can bring critical experience and financial leverage, a feature of many partnerships involving international business and public sector agencies.

Partnerships involving global corporations, international agencies, and governments operate at several levels at the same time. In some instances, these tiers are formally structured. The 'Partnership for Careers in Agriculture for Thai Youth', for example, operates at international, national, and local levels. The international players include the IYF and Shell International, the latter advocating the activities to its Thai business unit, and providing financial resources. The national level, essentially where convening and strategy development takes place, involves Shell Thai and several national companies, various government departments, and the IYF's Thai partner, NCYD, where the practical activity takes place in working with youth. These different levels can be mutually reinforcing and so directly enhance the partnership's performance. However, there can also be tensions between the different levels as diverse interests become apparent, even within the same organisation. Whether formally structured or informally operating at different levels, this highlights the need to manage partnerships vertically as well as horizontally, particularly when large and complex international organisations are involved.

Receptivity and capacity of key organisations is a critical ingredient in realising partnership potential. Corporations like BP, Rio Tinto, Vivendi, and Ondeo have

highlighted the need for a 'participatory and responsible' approach to handling social and environmental issues. They see this as a key competitive advantage in securing contracts, managing reputation and attracting, retaining and motivating key staff. The need for this approach is further accentuated in a climate where accessing finance increasingly comes with complex conditions attached, particularly where public financial institutions like the International Finance Corporation have a role to play. Corporate headquarters therefore encourage partnerships involving their business units, subsidiaries, and in joint ventures, both as a means of addressing situation specific issues and as a means of enhancing the corporation's overall attractiveness to sources of finance and contracts. Businesses positioning themselves in this way are building multicountry experience in working across sectors, and can bring much needed partnership capacity drawn from experience gained elsewhere.

Partnerships change over time, and sometimes dramatically so. The life cycle of many trisector partnerships begins with a less-diverse set of engaged organisations. Aguas de Cartagena was created as a joint venture between the Municipality of Cartagena and the Spanish water utility, Aguas de Barcelona, in 1994. The contract was conceived exclusively as a joint venture between the municipality and the business partner. At that initial stage, there was no contractual specifications regarding service to poorer communities. This changed as a result of the political imperatives of the municipality, the corporate culture of Aguas de Barcelona, and a World Bank loan to the municipality, signed in early 2000, to support the development of water and sanitation infrastructure in Cartagena. This loan was made conditional in part on the existing partners engaging with community groups to determine how best to extend the municipal water supply in the locality. This in turn led to the formation of a trisector partnership involving NGOs that have moved in and out, and community-based organisations that have steadily gained credibility within the partnership.

The evolution of organisational engagement can go beyond the partnership's direct formal participants. The Global Alliance for Workers and Communities (GA) was from the outset formally a trisector partnership, involving the International Youth Foundation, Nike Corporation, Mattel Inc, and the World Bank. However, the critical relationship within the partnership was between Nike and the IYF, highlighting the importance of understanding which partners, in practice, exert the most influence and to what effect. Following its inception in 1999, the GA has evolved further and is now beginning to engage with the international trade union movement, other key civil society organisations involved in the labour area, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). What this example reveals is that in many partnerships, key relationships exist, both within and outside formal boundaries, and that these change over time. Indeed in the case of the GA, its very success depends on such developments.

Evolving Partnerships

Endearing Myth

Stable and clearly bounded partnerships are most likely to be effective.

Enduring Truth

A partnership's success often depends on its evolution, for example, in its membership and wider relationships, and in some instances even in its purpose.

Direct Partnership Costs and Benefits

Endearing Myth

Partnership costs are so high as to make them unprofitable for the participating business units.

Enduring Truth

Focused partnerships often yield net benefits to those organisations directly participating, particularly over the medium and longer-term.

The initial motivation for many large companies to enter into trisector partnerships is often negative – reacting to pressures from a range of external stakeholders. But in the course of implementation, the BPD focus projects are providing more evidence that trisector partnerships can and do generate direct business benefits, alongside enhanced development impact. In partnership with local NGOs, community institutions and the district authorities, the project sponsor for the Sarshatali coal mining project in West Bengal, India – ICML/CESC – has implemented a range of income restoration and trust-building measures in the area of mine impact. In addition, four government departments – health, welfare, agriculture, and infrastructure – are now active in the area, each sharing with ICML the cost of wider community development and collaborating voluntarily with local NGOs (ASHA and Suchetana) and village committees to ensure relevance to local need. These trisector partnership arrangements have reversed what a year ago were rising levels of local dissatisfaction with the mining project, have helped ICML gain the confidence to begin construction work, and are helping to secure sustainable benefits for the local population – independent of whether the project eventually proceeds. However, the partnership's direct net financial benefits to date to CESC Limited have been estimated at U.S. \$280,000, made up mainly of cost savings in achieving the following:

- Information and knowledge acquisition
- Trust-building measures and community development
- Road construction

Aguas Argentinas has formed a variety of partnerships with city authorities, the regulator, local NGOs, and community groups to explore how best to deliver water and sanitation services more effectively to poor communities in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Although not quantified, there have been significant net business benefits. These include converting fraudulent users into customers in terms of reduced 'leakage', vandalism and other security issues.

Direct development benefits also accrue through partnership and can sit comfortably alongside the business benefit. In the case of Buenos Aires, the latest available figures (July 2000) indicate that water services have been extended to 1.2 million poor people and sewerage services to 0.3 million poor people in part as a result of the partnership approach. About 60 percent of these connections were funded by the operator's regular expansion programme, while the balance have been funded through tax credit agreements and other innovative institutional arrangements underpinned by a combination of public and private funds, and by community contributions.

Broader, longer-term benefits can arise through the partnership's positive impact on partner competencies. These in turn enhance their ability to engage elsewhere in beneficial activities – including other partnerships. Such competencies have developed as a result of the Sharshatali coal mining project.

- **Good Governance.** Improved ability of, and confidence in, the ability of local government to be effective and visible in carrying out its civic duties.
- **Attitudinal Change.** Greater receptiveness of businesses and government agencies to NGO-generated knowledge and NGO-led community engagement.
- **Expertise.** Growth in expertise of all parties, notably the NGOs involved, to mobilise and focus community participation towards tri-sector programme development and implementation.

The potential for extending benefits beyond the individual partnership is particularly enhanced where the international partners seek to systematically build learning across their operations. Ondeo is keen to share learning from its experience of using partnership mechanisms to meet the needs of the urban poor across its operations globally. To facilitate this, the company has created a unit in their Paris offices to coordinate and facilitate the cross-fertilization of such learning and ideas among the different Ondeo concessions and contract areas.

Extended Partnership Benefits

Endearing Myth

Extending benefits from the partnership requires scaling up or replicating successful partnership experience.

Enduring Truth

Extended benefits from the partnerships are most likely where there has been growth in participants' own abilities to work across sectors, and where the abilities are recognised and rewarded.

Conclusions

Many of the initiatives developed or supported by BPD would not have been cost-effective or even feasible if they had not been built as partnerships. The success, for example, of the Sharshatali coal mining project in India, the Global Alliance for Workers and Communities, the Global Road Safety Programme in Ghana, or the Build, Operate, Train, and Transfer water and sanitation project in the Eastern Cape and Northern Province of South Africa all relied heavily on enhanced relationships formed between participating organisations to mobilise and create synergies between needed competencies and resources.

But the uniqueness of BPD's overall experience has not been in imposing trisector partnerships. After all, the water and sanitation partnership in Port-au-Prince in Haiti involves an international NGO, GRET, working with a state-owned utility. The Global Alliance for Workers and Communities has little more than nominal public sector involvement, and indeed has to date progressed with scant engagement with the labour movement. The road safety initiatives in Vietnam and Costa Rica have had little real civil society engagement to date, and the NGO engaged in the road safety partnership in Ghana was actually created by the Global Road Safety Partnership. Almost all of the water and sanitation partnerships are trisector, but the main corporate partners are also experimenting in other approaches to contract compliance that are rooted in legal, technological and pricing innovations, rather than partnership-related ones. Only the Natural Resources Cluster partnerships have been exclusively trisector, but even here there were several that did not get off the ground, and one that was abandoned midstream.

BPD's trisector partnership approach has been permissive rather than prescriptive. It has created the possibilities for institutional innovation in addressing both individual and common organisational goals, rather than seeking to impose a 'one-size fits all' model across extraordinarily diverse situations and challenges. This way of appreciating a 'trisector partnership' approach appears, from the evidence to date, to be effective in that:

- It actively encourages innovative approaches to addressing social and environmental issues as well as business challenges and opportunities.
- It opens people's minds to the possibility of breaking down historical barriers and forming working relationships between key organisations spread across different parts of the local, national, and international community.
- It engages people and methods that are attuned to building unusual, complex, and often difficult partnerships.

On this basis, BPD's experience clearly demonstrates that this trisector partnership approach can deliver the resources, competencies, legitimacy, and critically – the will, energy, and focus to succeed, where institutions and sectors working alone have previously failed.



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If you would like to find out more about the projects and arguments presented in this paper, please visit www.bpdweb.org/kg/, where you will find links to more detailed information.

Business Partners for Development

ASPECT	ENDEARING MYTHS	ENDURING TRUTHS
Ensuring that the Partnership Contains the Right Mix of Partners.	Successful partnerships are those where partnering organisations share an interest in addressing common goals.	Successful partnerships include the right combination of organisations to secure the necessary institutional mandates and delivery mechanisms to achieve the partnership's objectives and activities.
Partner's Aims as Partnership Drivers	Successful partnerships are primarily shaped around a common or shared long-term vision or aim.	Successful partnerships are those shaped around common or shared activities that first and foremost deliver against the individual aims of each partner, particularly where these have been legitimised within the partnership.
Process Method Key to Operational Success	Individual champions are the key to successful partnerships, all the more so when diverse organisations are involved with very different aims and world views.	Methods for <i>building</i> partnerships are relatively interchangeable during their initial stages, but as the partnership is <i>operationalised</i> , structured methodologies become relatively more effective than approaches dependent on individual champions.
Fractured Contexts Can Enhance Partnership Potential	Partnership potential is greatest when the context ensures that partners are most receptive to, and knowledgeable of, each other.	Potential benefits from partnerships are often greatest where social, economic, and political uncertainties have historically constrained cooperation (although if the historical grievances are too great, this can also prevent the partners from coming together without an initial process of conflict resolution).
International Dimensions Provide Key Experience and Leverage	Partnership success is dependent on those most directly involved and with most at stake.	Partnership success often depends on individuals and organisations not directly involved that can bring critical experience and financial leverage, a feature of many partnerships involving international business and public sector agencies.
Evolving Partnerships	Stable and clearly bounded partnerships are most likely to be effective.	A partnership's success often depends on its evolution, for example, in its membership and wider relationships, and in some instances even in its purpose.
Direct Partnership Costs and Benefits	Partnership costs are so high as to make them unprofitable for the participating business units.	Focused partnerships often yield net benefits to those organizations directly participating, particularly over the medium and longer-term.
Extended Partnership Benefits	Extending benefits from the partnership requires scaling up or replicating successful partnership experience.	Extended benefits from the partnerships are most likely where there has been growth in participants' own abilities to work across sectors, and where the abilities are recognised and rewarded.