

THE AED GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP

Intersectoral Partnering
to Promote Democracy and Governance
Issue Paper

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Partnerships are a successful mechanism used by the health, environment, and economic sectors to achieve sustainable results. This paper argues that intersectoral partnering can be a useful mechanism for the democracy and governance (DG) sector as well. By providing examples of partnerships that fall within USAID democracy and governance objectives and describing many of the lessons learned about partnering, this paper concludes with some suggestions on how to encourage the formation of partnerships that promote DG goals.

Partnerships are an important mechanism for strengthening civil society. The most obvious benefit for civil society organizations is access to resources. However, as our examples below show, there are additional reasons for the non-profit and for-profit sectors to work together toward development objectives. Organizations can learn key skills from the private sector, such as bookkeeping, board development, and marketing. Members of civil society organizations benefit from the tangible products of these partnerships, like roads and wells. Finally, sustained interaction between sectors helps build bonds of trust, which strengthens social capital over time.

The first two sections of this paper discuss the definitions of partnership and describe the role of USAID in local and global partnerships. Section three provides examples of intersectoral partnerships for each USAID DG objective. Section four discusses lessons learned for ensuring successful and sustainable partnerships. The final section lists actions that USAID can take to encourage the formation and implementation of intersectoral partnerships to promote DG goals.

INTRODUCTION: PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES

Intersectoral partnering is the process of creating and implementing joint initiatives across two or more sectors. People from the non-profit, private and public sectors cooperate to achieve mutual understanding on an issue and negotiate and implement mutually agreeable plans for tackling the issue once it is identified. One example of a very successful partnership comes from Madagascar. The Commercial Agriculture Production project (CAP) implemented a strategy to rehabilitate a major feeder road in order to transport commodities from the Bekobay plain. While building the road, the CAP team helped to set up 14 user associations and created a union of those associations with the participation and financial contributions of local authorities, collectors, and agribusinesses. This involved legally transferring traditional government authority over roads to the road user associations. The associations are responsible for the road maintenance and have the authority to set tolls and to finance their activities. The costs of maintaining the roads have been reduced and their management has improved. For the first time in that area, the private sector, local government, and small farmers were working together, sharing the same goals, trusting each other, and putting resources toward a common objective.

This model of partnering is based on the belief that sectoral differences are beneficial in creating innovative solutions. Working together can strengthen the individual partners and local capacities. Partnering can help solve specific issues, as well as lay a foundation for broad, systemic change.

Potential partners come from six main sectors:

- Bilateral or multilateral organizations or other US government agencies
- National or local government
- International PVO, association, university or foundation
- Local NGO, CBO, local association, university or foundation
- Multinational or U.S. businesses
- Local businesses

There are a number of factors that motivate these groups to collaborate. For civil society organizations, partnering may help them increase the scale of their activity or raise credibility. Business motives may be marketing, production, public relations, or human resources development. Businesses may need to project a more positive image to a community. Governments may wish to take advantage of the other partners' strengths.

While it is acceptable (and expected) that the motives of the partners be different, they should be clear to each member of the partnership. For example, the NGO needs to be clear about its social objectives and the businesses should be forthcoming about their expectations to profit.

In the past five years, numerous papers and presentations have discussed the definitions, costs, and benefits of partnering. For more information see USAID's Partnering for Results (www.usaid.gov/pubs/isp) and Global Development Alliance (www.usaid.gov/gda) web pages as well as the World Bank's Business Partners for Development (www.bpdweb.org) webpages. This paper complements that series by discussing partnering in the context of the DG sector.

I. USAID and Intersectoral Partnering

USAID programming includes both local and global intersectoral partnering. Beginning with the New Partnership Initiative in 1995, USAID promoted the development of partnerships between local government, local business, and local civil society organizations. For the most part, USAID was not a member of the partnerships. In the past few years, USAID has increasingly become involved with

partnerships between multinational corporations and U.S. PVOs. USAID has acted as a broker for some of these partnerships and as a partner in others.

As a broker, USAID can help to identify potential partners, negotiate deals, and may have a peripheral role in implementation. The Private and Voluntary Cooperation Office has played this role quite a bit in the past few years. As a partner, USAID may provide finances, technical expertise, or managerial expertise.

Under the current administration, the Global Development Alliance (GDA) encourages more global intersectoral partnering. While the GDA does discuss the importance of developing alliances that will leverage significant resources, expertise, creative approaches, and new technologies to address international development issues, it seems that the emphasis is primarily on leveraging resources. If this is the case, there may be no need for a true partnership with a great deal of collaboration on the vision and implementation of the activity.

As USAID's role increases as a broker or partner with multinational corporations, there need to be guidelines put into place to help USAID staff know how to do this. The World Bank has done a substantial amount of work on creating this type of protocol. The GDA Secretariat in USAID has begun to outline guidelines. (See www.usaid.gov/gda/tab and www.bpdweb.org) "Attachment A: Due Diligence Guide" in the GDA's Tools for Alliance Builders emphasizes four essential areas for investigation—corporate image, social responsibility, environmental accountability and financial soundness—that comprise the minimum requirements for responsible due diligence.

II. Partnering to Achieve DG Objectives

While the majority of the examples we have on intersectoral partnering come from the health, environment, and economic sectors, this type of partnering can be a useful mechanism to strengthen civil society and promote democracy. Partnerships that involve civil society organizations working with government and businesses on any issue will strengthen the organization because it is forced to learn new ways to interact with the other sectors, as well as provide resources, and leverage strengths. The DG partnerships may represent less obvious connections than a public health NGO collaborating with a pharmaceutical company or an agriculture extension office working with an agribusiness. However, that does not mean that these partnerships do not exist. The following examples show that intersectoral partnerships either exist or are possible in each of USAID's DG objectives.

Rule of Law

- The International Business Leaders Forum, collaborating with Ivory and Sime, has partnered with Amnesty International on a research project designed to track human rights abuses against labor. Together they have produced seven detailed maps indicating where the greatest percentage of human rights violations against labor take place.
- Reebok International Ltd. and Levi Strauss and Co. are working with civil society organizations to conduct independent audits of their labor practices. In Indonesia, Reebok has worked with a social science research organization (Insan Hitawasana Sejahtera) to survey factory employees about their working conditions. In the Dominican Republic, Levi Strauss worked with Business for Social Responsibility to locate local and international NGOs to verify worker conditions. Levi Strauss notes that the partnership was characterized by mistrust at first. However, in the

end, the company accepted the NGOs' recommendations and Levi Strauss working conditions are considered some of the best on the island.

- USAID and the Department of State support a non-governmental organization, the Fair Labor Association (FLA), which addresses human rights violations in the apparel and footwear industries in the U.S. and abroad. The FLA brings together a diverse group of organizations, including businesses, such as Nike, Reebok, Levi Strauss, Van Heusen, and Liz Claiborne; NGOs, such as the National Council of Churches, International Labor Rights Fund, Business for Social Responsibility, and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights; and universities.
- USAID has recently developed a strategic alliance with the U.S. Chocolate Manufacturers' Association (CMA), several key member companies, and other organizations. There is growing concern that some agricultural goods finding their way to developed country markets are being produced with exploitative forms of labor practices. In West Africa, cocoa and chocolate have become a focal point for issues regarding abusive child labor and trafficking practices used in cocoa production. Consistent with concerns expressed by the U.S. Congress and human rights groups, the Chocolate Manufacturers Association and others have signed a protocol for cocoa beans and their derivative products to be grown and processed in a manner that complies with the International Labor Organization Convention 182 on child labor.
- USAID is continuing to develop a global alliance with the Chocolate Manufacturers' Association, its member companies, and others. The alliance focuses, in part, on the joint concern that exploitative child labor and trafficking practices are being used in cocoa production in West Africa. USAID and other alliance members are jointly financing a series of studies and an action plan for West Africa focusing on child labor and other small farmer economic and social issues. The pilot phase is expected to require \$7-\$8 million over a 3-year period, and the U.S. cocoa/chocolate industry has committed to match USAID's financial resources. The U.S. Department of Labor and the State Department have also expressed interest in supporting the child labor and trafficking aspects of the work.

Elections and Political Processes

While no concrete examples of partnerships were found in the area of election and political processes, examples could include:

- An NGO that provides electoral assistance might leverage resources from for-profit organizations that manufacture electoral equipment (e.g. voting booths for urban areas). Voting would take place in a local government building.
- NGOs working to develop civic and voter education campaigns could partner with businesses that produce advertising materials (i.e. posters, brochures, etc). They might partner with governmental organizations to get space or materials as well (although this might prove difficult since the educational campaigns should be nonpartisan).
- When developing electoral legislation, NGO advocacy or watchdog groups could partner with legal firms to draft language or research legislation. They would provide information to Congress when lobbying for specific laws.

Civil Society

There are numerous examples of intersectoral partnerships that focus on health, the environment and economic issues that have strengthened civil society as a by-product of the activity. Some partnerships are created to strengthen civil society.

- The example of the Madagascar Commercial Agriculture Production (CAP) project described in the introduction demonstrates how an agricultural project can promote democracy objectives in that road user associations and a union were created.
- As part of the World Bank's efforts to provide forums for dialog regarding privatization reforms, the Economic Development Institute invites labor groups and governmental representatives to seminars to discuss policy alternatives. For example, in the Philippines, labor groups were apprehensive about the privatization of the water supply. To stimulate discussion, labor groups and governmental representatives were invited to a seminar regarding these reforms. In another activity, Argentine labor union representatives and governmental officials were invited to attend a seminar on privatization together. These seminars provide opportunities for labor unions to become more involved in the policy process.
- USAID's E&E Bureau funds the Media Law program, designed to help professional media entities in Central and Eastern Europe become independent and sustainable. The program works with the private law firm Covington and Burling on a pro bono basis.
- The Millennium Alliance for Social Investment has brokered partnerships between Smith-Klein Beecham and Children International in nine Latin American and Asian Countries. It has also brokered the relationship between Nestle and the Churches Medical Association in Zambia, Merck and the Conference Board in Russia, and Monsanto and Winrock International in Senegal and Indonesia. These alliances are intended to create wealth and improve the quality of life for the communities involved.

Governance

- The Municipal Development Program, a network of NGOs in Africa, brings together leaders from government, civil society, and the private sector to facilitate improved local governance. For example, in Mozambique, local and national authorities and NGOs held a workshop to discuss decentralization. At the end of the workshop, participants adopted a resolution regarding future collaboration in decentralization efforts.
- Transparency International (TI) is one of the best examples of bringing together government, civil society, and business to fight corruption in a global coalition. The main tool that TI employs is providing information to increase awareness. Their activities include: an annual corruption index, the Global Corruption Report to document the state of corruption around the world, and offering Integrity Awards to individuals and groups who expose wrongdoing. This alliance is made up of governmental organizations from around the world (such as USAID, AusAID, SIDA, and DFID), foundations (including Ford, MacArthur, Tinker, and the Avina Group from Switzerland), businesses (JP Morgan, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Shell International among others), and finally, their national chapters. The national chapters are considered non-profit organizations and are located in approximately 85 countries.
- The Civil-Military partnership between universities and research institutes aims to foster civil-military relations that are compatible with and conducive to democracy.

- The American Bar Association Central and Eastern European Law Initiatives relies on the pro-bono work of volunteer attorneys as well as other experts. One aim is to establish a regional continuing legal education institute. The idea is that the institute will achieve financial self-sufficiency through a combination of USAID funding, a private endowment, and contributions from private sector resources.
- The Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas is a partnership of public and private sector organizations seeking to promote informed debate on policy alternatives for improving education policy.

Humanitarian Assistance

- The International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF), based in the United Kingdom, actively promotes corporate engagement in humanitarian aid efforts. IBLF notes in a recent study, however, that much of the relief efforts provided by the private sector are inappropriate to the specific situation. For this reason, IBLF advocates greater participation of local government and non-governmental organizations in corporate relief efforts (see “Human Disaster Relief: Framing the Issue. <http://www.iblf.org/csr/csrwebassist.nsf>).
- Crown Agents has worked with the UN in Albania to house refugees. Working with DFID, this company also established demobilization centers in Sierra Leone to facilitate the transition from armed to civilian rule. Microsoft partnered with the UNHCR in Kosovo to create refugee registration systems (see <http://www.iblf.org/csr/csrwebassist.nsf>). In another example, USAID partnered with BP Amoco to provide humanitarian relief during the flooding in Mozambique in March 2000.

III. Lessons Learned

Experience with intersectoral partnering has revealed a number of lessons that are applicable to both local level as well as multinational partnerships. These lessons apply equally to all sectors, and should be kept in mind when working to strengthen democracy and governance through partnerships.

There are a few facts:

Inter-sectoral partnerships can address large-scale and diverse issues. Because each sector brings specific concerns and resources to the table, inter-sectoral partnering can address broad issues that impact each partner. These issues are ones that no individual sector has the resources and ability to manage alone and in which every sector has a stake.

Partnerships are between organizations, not individuals. The people directly involved in the activity have to continually reach out to actors in the other sectors to ensure that they know about and are involved in the activity in as many ways as possible. There must be broad-based support to ensure sustainability.

Inter-sectoral partnerships encourage creativity. ISPs develop innovations by identifying assumptions in traditional approaches to development issues and challenging them with new approaches.

There are also some necessary conditions:

The focus must be a common issue that is important to all partners. Potential partners need to determine why forming an ISP is necessary to address a problem, how key actors are affected by the problem, and to what extent resources from the different stakeholders are required. While partners may hold very different points of view, the partnership should focus on the overlapping areas of interest.

Belief in partnering as a strategy. Each actor must believe that this strategy can improve the outcomes compared to the status quo. They must be willing to treat each other as equal partners.

Perception of equal power and influence in the relationship. An important factor in determining the long-term success of a partnership is a belief from all partners that there is approximate parity of power and influence in the relationship. There should be a clear understanding of each partner's comparative advantage, and all parties should believe that they have leverage on decisions affecting the partnership.

Willingness to commit the particular resources that it is able to share. Continued mutual influence depends on everyone's resources being valued and used. Thus, implementation programs need to be designed to make use of the comparative advantage of different participants.

Dynamic, committed leadership. The interest and commitment of the leadership of partner organizations is critically important if the partnership is to address and resolve issues that inevitably develop.

Partners must also recognize some requirements for the process of partnering to ensure successful partnerships:

The partnering process requires a long-term commitment. How slowly a partnership evolves will depend on the broader enabling environment as well as the specific rules and incentives adopted. It is important for the partnership to remain open to new partners as the activity evolves. Issues may redefine themselves over time.

Partnerships require a sincere commitment from all partners. Partners must develop a commitment to respect their differences. Partners should also be prepared to commit time and resources before the collaboration takes off. Furthermore, partners must be committed to making their motives clear to each other and be willing to hold each other mutually accountable.

Partnerships are more effective when their members pay attention to both process and product. There are both process and product outcomes of any partnership. Focusing on just one or the other will lead to failure. The way decisions are made, the way meetings are conducted, and the level of participation all affect the products and outcomes of the partnership. At the same time, decisions and programs that produce concrete results on issues that originally stimulated the partnership are critical to partners' evaluation of it.

Finally there are a few things that we know have to happen to ensure successful partnerships:

Maintain distinctiveness of each sector. Inter-sectoral partnering does not mean a merging of roles by the different sectors. It should not be expected, for example, that the private sector take over responsibility for things that the government used to do.

Build and maintain a vision. Effective partnerships tend to be centered on a common vision that keeps the relationship together and helps the partners transcend the difficulties that may arise from different operating styles. Partners need to remember the reasons for undertaking the initiative. This means not

just keeping people sensitive to the issue at hand, but also keeping people focused upon the unique win-win situations that partnering can produce. Partners do not have to have the same vision, but there should be a specific area of interest that overlaps enough so that they wish to obtain the same small objective on a particular issue.

Establish and sustain a working framework. A working framework refers to those systems, procedures, practices, and habits that allow two or more organizations to communicate and coordinate in a relatively efficient and cost-effective manner. A working framework takes time and patience to develop. It often begins with joint development of a work plan that identifies practical tasks that need to be done. This work plan should include information on goals and objectives of the partnership, planned inputs and activities, outcome indicators, plans for collaboration, sustainability strategies, and strategies for communicating and collaborating. The work plan should clearly state the roles and responsibilities for each partner.

Sign a Memorandum of Understanding. An MOU signed by all partners formalizes the commitment of the partners to the vision and/or work plan.

IV. Role for USAID

There are normally four sequential stages in the evolution of a partnership. Each stage consists of a set of activities that establishes the capacity allowing the next stage to occur. These stages are Exploration, Establishing Trust, Coordinating Systems, and Cooperation. The process of partnering itself needs to be democratic, participatory, and transparent—providing a chance to put DG principles to work.

The exploratory phase is particularly important because it influences the future relationship and how successful the partnership will be. USAID can play an influential role at this point.

Discussion and joint planning must be supported. In the case of an emerging partnership, there has to be an opportunity for groups to meet and talk about what they are doing. Intersectoral partnerships rarely happen through a rigid plan. There is the story of oil companies being invited to hear about USAID programs in the Middle East and at the end of the talk, a representative of one company stated interest in some of the activities and wanted to collaborate. Another example of a project that sees value in supporting discussion is the US-Asia Environmental Partnership. Last year, USAEP sponsored the attendance of more than 100 Asian buyers at the 72nd Water Environment Federation Technology conference. They also arrange meetings between American companies and Asian buyers as well as technology representatives. Since 1992, USAEP has generated 1.12 billion in sales and contracts for American companies.

Partnerships require plenty of time to develop. It often takes a long time to negotiate relationships. Some partnerships may develop within a few months, but some may take years. One example of a partnership between two cities is the relationship between La Crosse Wisconsin and Dubna Russia. It began in the late 1980s with children from the two cities exchanging peace lanterns to float down the Mississippi and Volga Rivers to promote world peace. In the early 1990s, the cities began a more traditional sister city relationship. In 1992, a formal partnership was established through a USAID program that centered on health care systems. By 2000, nearly \$1million had been spent that led to the town of Dubna having a new maternity hospital, a kidney dialysis center, women's wellness clinics, and a rehabilitation center for disabled children and adults. Additionally, they successfully lobbied to change the Russian government's formulas that based hospital aid on the number of patients. This old formula punished cities that promoted home care. They successfully lobbied for a new formula to calculate assistance.

Partners need to be encouraged to concentrate on the substantive content of the partnership through effective group processes. The process is very important to ensure positive outcomes. The process activities, though, need to focus on developing a shared vision, clarifying and ensuring compatible values, and generating enthusiastic commitment. All partners want to see results, and have clarity about results.

There needs to be an early emphasis on the importance of sustainability. Intersectoral partnerships can take many forms. Some may be short-term while others may last much longer and involve objectives of the partnership changing over time. Whatever the case is, the partners need to be in agreement about it from the start.

Specific steps to take include:

1. Think about the goals and aims of the partnership.
2. Think about the realities of the situation and the potential partners. Understand the potential for working together and anticipate problems.
3. Once you find a partner who is interested in working on the activity, define the problems together.
4. Agree on desired outcomes and how they will be measured.
5. Set directions, develop an action plan, and implement the activity.

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Web Sites

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