Transitioning to

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Georg von Schnurbein (Ed.)

Transitioning to
Strong Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals

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Series Editor: Manfred Max Bergman

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Volume 17: Transitioning to Strong Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals
ISBN 978-3-03897-882-4 (Hbk);
ISBN 978-3-03897-883-1 (PDF)

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Transitioning to **Strong Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals**

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For citation purposes, cite each article independently as indicated below:

Author 1, and Author 2. 2020. Chapter Title. In *Transitioning to Strong Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals*. Edited by Georg von Schnurbein. Transitioning to Sustainability Series 17. Basel: MDPI, Page Range.

Published with the generous support of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

ISBN 978-3-03897-882-4 (Hbk)
ISBN 978-3-03897-883-1 (PDF)
ISSN: 2624-9324 (Print)
ISSN: 2624-9332 (Online)
doi:10.3390/books978-3-03897-883-1

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Abstracts

One for All—SDG 17 as a Driver to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals
by Georg von Schnurbein

One for all! The first part of the famous musketeer motto seems to fit perfectly with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, "Partnerships for the Goals". While the sixteen goals before are directed towards concrete areas of action, SDG 17 serves as a convener and facilitator for all the other goals. This article offers a short introduction to SDG 17. In particular, it opens up a discussion on how different combinations of partnerships should be embedded in order to achieve the targets of SDG 17. Based on a literature review and the following chapter of this volume, we formulate implications for research and practice on the diversity of multi-stakeholder partnerships, the necessity of overarching norms, the importance of evaluation, and the value of trust and willingness to make partnerships work.

Collectively Addressing SDGs to Change an Industry: The Case of the Water Revolution Foundation
by Lonneke Roza and Lucas Meijs

Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Partnerships) concerns collaborative efforts between companies and societal actors. One potential collaborative effort that is often overlooked involves companies that join together to form a civil society organization, based on a common goal of creating positive social change through a non-commercial strategy. Such forms of collaboration for the purpose of creating positive social change are needed, as traditional ways of addressing grand challenges have proven insufficient. In this chapter, we draw on a single case study to discuss a particular form of partnership among companies within a specific industry. The partnership is formalized as an industry foundation aimed at creating positive social change. Hence, we examine the specific dynamics of such an industry foundation. This industry foundation uses collective power to leverage resources from the market sector and invest them across sectors in NGOs and social enterprises that can help to transform the entire industry. Such foundations can play an important role in helping companies align themselves to the Sustainable

Development Goals. Based on this case, we draw three main conclusions. First, industry foundations can be differentiated from other non-commercial structures emerging from companies (e.g., corporate foundations, collective corporate foundations, industry associations, and multi-stakeholder initiatives) by shifting toward a collective of stakeholders within a particular industry, instead of around a particular social issue. Second, industry foundations face challenges with regard to legitimizing their public benefit, as they are vulnerable to questions concerning whether they are truly operating to the public benefit or whether they are actually private interests in disguise. Third, one major potential of industry foundations is that those involved in them are part of the industry—they know the possibilities and limitations of the industry, and they are trusted by others within that industry. This type of foundation can thus serve as a "coalition of the willing", by bringing together front-runners who can actually accelerate change within an industry.

Building Strong Partnership for SDGs: Analyzing Participation of Nigerian Stakeholders

by Okechukwu Enechi and Philipp Pattberg

The concept of multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) is promoted as one of the key tools for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 17 emphasizes the critical importance of partnerships for sustainable development, based on the assumption that partnerships will mobilize a wide range of stakeholders in the sharing of knowledge, expertise, technology, and additional resources towards achieving the global development agenda. However, studies have shown that global multi-stakeholder partnerships are challenged by unbalanced participation, particularly the limited participation of stakeholders from sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). This lack of inclusiveness and participation often leads to incoherence in agenda-setting, contested decision-making processes, and suboptimal outcomes of partnerships. Yet, developing strong partnerships for the SDGs requires increased participation, inclusiveness, and diversity that enhances the role and influence of partnerships towards achieving the SDGs. Consequently, research needs to urgently explore how multi-stakeholder partnerships can achieve increased participation and inclusiveness by mobilizing underrepresented stakeholders. Against this challenge, this chapter analyzes inclusiveness and representation in MSPs related to stakeholders from the SSA region. Using Nigeria as a case study, we explore the participation of Nigerian stakeholders in MSPs, focusing on obstacles for increased participation and inclusiveness. The chapter is organized as follows: first, we review the Partnerships for SDGs online platform (hosted by the United Nations), focusing on multi-stakeholder partnerships' self-reported implementation in Nigeria. Second, using survey data on SSA partnerships, we analyze the factors hindering participation in partnerships. Finally, this chapter discusses the impacts of limited participation and inclusiveness on partnerships concerning agenda-setting, decision-making process, and outcomes. The chapter concludes that an improved understanding of participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships will offer an opportunity for reflection, in the SSA context, required for building strong and effective partnerships for the SDGs.

Institutional and Policy Framework in the Governance of Capture Fisheries and Its Bearing on Co-Management: Experiences from Zambia

by Francis M. Chama and Jacob Mwitwa

Recent scientific reports highlight the urgent need for transformations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and long-term sustainability. The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence that institutional and policy frameworks have on co-management partnerships in poor communities like Lake Bangweulu open fisheries in Zambia. This chapter is based on field research that aims to generate information for sustainable fisheries management, through strong partnerships in the form of co-management. The research took a qualitative and quantitative approach to explore the institutional frameworks and the appropriateness of the fisheries policy for co-management. Data were obtained through observation, surveys, and documentation. The findings show that the involvement of fishing communities in the management of the fisheries at all levels, from policymaking to implementation, would lead to greater awareness and management compliance by resource users. However, policy and management strategies should focus on community development rather than just conservation. A policy based on conservation is seen as not designed to improve on local livelihood, but conserves resources for the benefit of facilitating institutions. Strong partnerships that take a holistic approach in the governance and management of fisheries are critical in achieving the SDG 17. The study suggests how institutional and policy frameworks can both facilitate and constrain fisheries co-management. Presented here are the normative criteria from which to evaluate and improve partnerships in co-management.

Reflecting on the Role of Academia–Private Sector Partnerships in Moving Forward with the SDGs
by Annmarie Ryan and Christian Hauser

Partnerships are enshrined as an integral mechanism for the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. However, despite the apparent prominence of partnerships in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is interesting to note that, in SDG 17, only two sub-targets correspond to the interaction between partners. Furthermore, while partnerships between academia and other sectors are on the rise, there is a lack of relevant conceptual framework to practice and support impactful partnership development. In the present essay, we advocate a process perspective and describe how higher education institutions (HEIs) can engage in partnerships for sustainable development in which knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources are mobilized and shared. Using examples from the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) Champion schools, this essay addresses the lack of conceptual framework by offering a two-dimensional framework, described as the partnership sweet spot (PSS), as a guideline to enable HEIs to locate and position their current or desired partnership activities. By gaining a greater understanding of the status quo of the partnerships, we suggest that HEIs can use this information to work towards the PSS located at the center of the proposed model. This PSS is where faculties are engaged and drive partnerships that align with their teaching and research interests, but are supported, enabled and equipped by management to do so. Furthermore, we identify that, while the individual school agenda must be served, this should be done in a manner that meaningfully addresses the SDG-related challenges of the wider society, and that the school provides a framework to measure or reflect on the impact of their partnership activities.

Achieving the Global 2030 Agenda: What Role for Voluntary Sustainability Standards?
by Axel Marx and Charline Depoorter

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 calls for strengthening implementation means and revitalizing global partnerships for these goals. In this sense, the 2030 Agenda explicitly recognises the importance of the private sector to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Among private actors, Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) can potentially play an important role in governing sustainable development. With regard to SDG 17, VSS are relevant implementation means for the SDGs, as they share similar objectives. They also contribute to revitalising partnerships for these goals by linking the Global South to the Global North through global value chains. The objective of this chapter is to present the potential contribution that VSS can make in achieving the SDGs. We first introduce VSS and how they operate, and provide some leading examples of VSS. We then discuss how VSS are linked to the SDGs. Next, key developments in the landscape of VSS are identified. Lastly, we show that, despite their growing number and increasing complementarity to public governance instruments, VSS face challenges in terms of credibility, effectiveness, and cooperation.

Working Together: A Logical Thing?
by Alice Hengevoss and Nicholas Arnold

Cross-sector social partnerships (CSSPs) are quite broadly viewed as important mechanism to successfully address pressing societal challenges, as the combined efforts of actors from different sectors can lead to innovative solutions and leveraging capacities and reach. However, the varying institutional logics of different actors may also make such partnerships challenging and prone to conflict and failure. In this chapter, we ask how the existence of different institutional logics can encourage and challenge the emergence and functioning of CSSPs. We address this question by discussing drivers, opportunities and challenges related to CSSPs. Based on a literature review and a literature-based case study of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), we suggest that different institutional logics should not be seen as insurmountable obstacles for the implementation of successful CSSPs. Rather, they are important drivers of such endeavors and an important prerequisite for value-creation within these cross-sectoral efforts. However, caution with respect to over-optimistic calls for such partnerships is advised. Even the FSC with its comprehensive governance-mechanisms has experienced significant challenges, and has only been able to meet its objectives to a limited degree.

A Conceptual Overview of How and Why to Evaluate Partnership
by Oto Potluka

Partnerships have a great potential to positively contribute to policymaking and policy implementation when they are properly implemented. The current practice shows, that in Sustainability Development Goal No. 17 (SDG17), monitoring over evaluation prevails, and evaluations are rare. The existence of monitoring indicators under the SDG17 neither says anything about the quality of partnerships established and implemented, nor about their achievements. This chapter is based on literature review to add to the knowledge on why and how to evaluate SDG17, and partnerships generally. For that reason, we take the EU cohesion policy and public-private partnerships, as examples of policies in which partnership is a standard tool, to provide insights from project evaluation research and challenges of implementing SDG17. The novelty of the contribution is in the building of an evaluation framework. The evaluation framework approach is based on seven evaluation criteria: (1) accountability and legitimacy; (2) improving quality and performance; (3) planning improvements; (4) building capacity; (5) learning; (6) ownership among program participants; and (7) empowerment—together with defining characteristics of functioning partnerships—(1) common goals; (2) mutual benefits; (3) long-term relationship; (4) acceptance of cooperation; (5) the contribution of each partner; (6) synergistic effects; and (7) joint decision-making. Moreover, the framework also applies general evaluation criteria—relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts, and sustainability.

Cross-Sector Partnerships for Implementing Community Climate Action Plans: Structural features, Partner Outcomes and Plan Outcomes
by Krista Wong, Amelia Clarke and Eduardo Ordonez-Ponce

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, target 17.17 aims to "encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships." This research on collaborative strategic management and cross-sector partnerships studies structural features and outcomes in the context of climate action plans in Canadian

cities. Its purpose is to assess the structural features of a partnership during plan implementation, and the related plan- and partner-centric outcomes. Four Partners for Climate Protection member municipalities were studied and their implementation structures, plan outcomes, and partner outcomes qualitatively assessed. Findings confirm that five implementation structural features are crucial for enabling the achievement of climate mitigation targets, and that partnership design affects partner outcomes, including a new outcome of 'moral support'. This study fills theoretical gaps on the structural features of cross-sector partnerships that are aiming to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and energy usage in cities, and allows for additional insight into partner outcomes by participating in cross-sector partnerships.

One for All—SDG 17 as a Driver to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

Georg von Schnurbein

1. Introduction

One for all! The first part of the famous musketeer motto seems to fit perfectly with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, "Partnerships for the Goals". While the sixteen goals before are directed towards concrete areas of action, SDG 17 serves as a convener and facilitator for all the other goals. With the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2001, collaboration was seen as an important driver to attain these goals (Goal 8). With the SDGs, this approach was accentuated. Before 2015, 6203 partnerships were registered on the UN Partnership Platform. From 2015–2018 (latest figures available), a total of 7924 partnerships were registered. Thus, the number of partnerships for the SDGs has already outnumbered the partnerships before them. This article offers a short introduction to SDG 17. In particular, it opens up a discussion on how different combinations of partnerships should be embedded in order to achieve the targets of SDG 17.

In this article, we will provide a theoretical foundation of collaboration building for co-creation and co-production. Additionally, we will present the progress of SGD 17 so far. Finally, we will discuss several propositions for future development that are informed by the following chapters of this volume.

2. Collaboration through Co-Creation and Co-Production

In the analysis of the MDGs, the division of the world into donors and recipients of assistance was accentuated as one of the limitations to success, although a global partnership was proclaimed as one of eight goals (Wysokińska 2017). Hence, one of the major differences between the MDGs and the SGDs is the universal nature of the latter without differentiation and the full inclusion of all areas of society, including state, market, and civil society. From a theoretical perspective, the MDGs' failure can be explained by a wrong, albeit unilateral, perception of partnership.

The concept of co-production is a helpful starting point to build a theoretical foundation for partnerships for the SDGs. The concept was developed in the field of public service provision as attempt to describe the inclusion of ordinary citizens in the delivery of public services (Brudney and England 1983). Today, the idea of citizen involvement goes beyond mere production and includes production topics such as governance, creation and the management of public services (Pestoff et al. 2006). Joshi and Moore (2004) define institutionalized co-production as "the provision of public services (broadly defined, to include regulation) through a regular long-term relationship between state agencies and organized groups of citizens, where both make substantial resource contributions". Hence, co-production entails long-term relationships between different types of actors, and resources are provided by all parties involved.

This definition is very helpful to transfer the idea of co-production onto the global partnership for SGDs, where partnerships between state, business and civil society are sought to provide financial resources, access to technology, increase capacities, support global trade and build on system development.

Moreover, further aspects on co-production can be derived from the literature. Osborne et al. (2016) postulate that co-production is oriented towards meeting the needs of individuals or the society at large and towards building capacities to resolve future challenges. By emphasizing the "service" aspect of co-production, they implement the idea of value co-creation. Hence, every combined effort for public service provision, governance, design, management or the production of service creates a value for and has an impact on society.

Another aspect of co-production is the question of voluntary or involuntary contribution. Initially, the participation of citizens in co-production was defined as a voluntary cooperative action (Brudney and England 1983). Nowadays, co-production has gained major attention in public reforms and, thus, is often installed as the only option. Citizens may become obliged to participate in public service provision (Lindenmeier et al. 2019). Similar effects can be observed in the development and the implementation of the SDGs.

Finally, coproduction is a universal concept to address public service provision. The previous literature investigates the use of co-production in areas such as healthcare (Vooberg et al. 2015), agriculture (Carolan 2006), environment protection (Kasymova and Gaynor 2014), urban regeneration (Carter 2013), natural resource management (Maynard 2015), or civic engagement (Clark et al. 2013). One may find research on co-production for every different SDG.

3. Content and Progress of SDG 17

The aim of SDG 17 is formulated as "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development". In essence, five areas of activity are covered by this goal: finance, information and communications technology (ICT), capacity building, trade, and systemic issues. Table 1 provides an overview of the related targets and indicators. The latest progress report is available for 2019 (UN 2019). The report names positive development in the area of technology, especially in terms of access to the internet. At the end of 2018, more than half of the global population had access to the internet. However, finance and trade remain challenging targets for the SGDs. In finance, official development aid (ODA) net flows reached up to USD 149 billion in 2018, a decrease of 2.7 per cent in real terms compared to the year before. On the contrary, personal remittances to low- and middle-income countries reached an all-time high of USD 550 billion. No special mention is found in the report on donations and private grant-making. However, data on private donations for development aid are scarce. A survey by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in 2018 reported annual donations of USD 7.9 billion by the largest grant-making foundations, mainly from the United States (OECD 2018). In Europe, for instance, private donations for development aid stem typically from individuals, not foundations. Hence, data availability is even lower.

In terms of trade, the share of the merchandise of the least developed countries in world merchandise remains below 1 percent. This slow growth threatens the expected targets for 2020. Additionally, tariffs still cause barriers for worldwide trade and global trade is threatened by tensions among the largest economies (UN 2019).

The UN progress report further elaborates that ODA for capacity building has been stagnating since 2010 at 14 per cent of total sector-allocable aid, mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (UN 2019).

A further important target for SDG 17 is the improvement of multi-stakeholder partnerships. In 2018, progress on multi-stakeholder partnerships was reported by 51 of 114 countries, leading, for instance, to better public financial management and an increase in contributions by civil society and the private sector (UN 2019).

Table 1. Targets formulated for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, Partnerships for the Goals (Source: UN 2017).

Targets	
Finance	
17.1	Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection
17.2	Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries
17.3	Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources
17.4	Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress
17.5	Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries
Technology	
17.6	Enhance North–South, South–South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism
17.7	Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favorable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed
17.8	Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology
Capacity-Building	
17.9	Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North–South, South–South and triangular cooperation

Table 1. *Cont.*

Targets	
Trade	
17.10	Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda
17.11	Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020
17.12	Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access
Systemic Issues	
17.13	Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence
17.14	Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
17.15	Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development
17.16	Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries
17.17	Encourage and promote effective public, public–private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships
17.18	By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
17.19	By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

4. Research and Practical Implications on SDG 17

In the following chapters of the volume, different types of multi-stakeholder partnerships are the focus of the research. This may be surprising as the core focus of SDG 17 is financial and ICT topics. However, the goal itself targets strong partnerships, which should not only be understood as partnerships between states, but also between different social actors. The question then arises as to how different actors from the public and private sectors and civil society can cooperate in order to strengthen and achieve the targets of the SDGs. Hence, building on the outcomes of the following chapters, we posit the following implications for future research and practical transition.

4.1. Exploitation of the Diversity of Cross-Sector Collaboration

The dominant logic of cross-sector collaboration is a public–private partnership (PPP). At its core, this approach describes "long-term collaborative relationships between one or more private actors and public bodies that combine public sector management or oversight with a private partner's resources and competencies for a direct provision of a public good or service" (Kivleniece and Quelin 2012, p. 273). The advantages of PPPs in the context of the SDGs are their potential to overcome massive infrastructure gaps and the fact that they can be arranged as hybrid constructs to create social value beyond service provision (Berrone et al. 2019). However, as the chapters in this volume show, there are more variations to the idea of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Roza and Meijs (2020) elaborate on the case study of a collective corporate foundation that transitions corporate resources to social enterprises and nonprofits. Although no public actor is involved, this case study supports the idea of co-production. Ryan and Hauser (2020) show examples of academia–private sector collaborations for the SGDs. Pattberg and Enechi (2020) highlight the potential of bottom-up governance and inclusiveness. In particular, local actors should be better included in partnerships. Chama and Mwitwa (2020) present a case study on co-management through the involvement of communities. In addition to the examples mentioned in the chapters, one can think about new forms of impact investing, such as conditional conversion models or layered funding that could increase the financial resources to achieve the SDGs (Hebb 2013). Another stream of innovation could be generated through a further analysis of hybrid organizations (Billis 2010). Hence, reaching the targets of the SGDs requires an intensified search for different and innovative forms of cross-sector collaboration. This search has to be both research-based and informed by practical experience.

4.2. Develop and Demand Overarching Standards and Rules

A constant critique of multi-stakeholder partnerships—especially when partners from different parts of the world are involved—is the unbalanced levels of norms or regulations. While the political debate about standards envisions more regulation based on legal requirements, Marx and Depoorter (2020) discuss another option, voluntary sustainability standards (VSS). These standards are especially promising to realize another target of SDG 17, the promotion of a non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system. Existing VSS cover the topics of several SGDs. However, as the authors show, VSS face challenges in terms of legitimacy, effectiveness and coordination that need to be solved in the near future. One of the most well-known VSS, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), is the focus of an analysis in the chapter by Hengevoss and Arnold (2020). By applying institutional logics theory, they highlight that implicit rules play an important role in both hindering and succeeding in collaborative processes. Hence, for the success of the SDGs, it is necessary to not only provide targets and indicators, but also common standards of regulation and implementation. The debate on VSS highlights different perceptions of co-creation and co-production. While the co-creation of VSS is usually successful, co-production in the realization phase is much more difficult. Thus, we call for the further advancement of procedures of co-production, so that VSS are more frequently used as standard operating procedures than regulations and documents of control.

4.3. Engage in Comprehensive Evaluation of Partnerships

It is no secret that results—even hard figures—are always in need of interpretation. Potluka (2020) highlights different purposes of evaluation, such as accountability, quality improvement, capacity building, and learning. The last two purposes are of special interest in regard to SGD 17. Capacity building can only happen through learning and knowledge exchange, be it North–South, South–South or cross-sector collaboration. In his analysis, Potluka (2020) shows that most evaluation studies are concentrated on issues of accountability and performance measurement. As a further improvement, they should incorporate a wider range of purposes, especially learning and empowerment.

4.4. Build on Trust and Willingness to Achieve Progress

Several chapters in this volume discuss the power relationships in multi-stakeholder partnerships (Chama and Mwitwa 2020; Pattberg and Enechi 2020; Hengevoss and Arnold 2020). Chama and Mwitwa (2020) analyze the management of fisheries and emphasize that management strategies should be directed towards community development rather than conservation. Although the SDGs entail many aspects of preservation (of nature, for instance), they proclaim an idea of progress and development, especially for the less developed areas of the world. Wong et al. (2020) highlight that engagement is one of the crucial aspects for successful multi-stakeholder partnerships. They show how participating organizations and individuals profit from outcomes generated by other partners. Hence, further analysis on trust-building activities in the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships is needed (Sloan and Oliver 2013). A solution may be found in adopting approaches of co-production that were developed to empower citizens and to build trust between public service agencies and citizens (Brudney and England 1983).

5. Conclusions

A major take-away of the MDGs is that collaboration is crucial for the success of the SDGs. Although the figures report a strong increase in partnerships for the SDGs, the situation remains critical. First, many partnerships do not achieve their aspired targets and fall short in becoming strong, sustainable partnerships. Second, the hurdles to build and install partnerships—especially cross-sector partnerships—remain high and hinder further development. Third, evaluations on the outcomes of partnerships are difficult, as real change often happens with a larger time lag. However, the chapters in this volume discuss several promising approaches and offer theoretical analysis for the future development of partnerships for the SDGs. In this sense, we are convinced that this collection of research will help to achieve the SDGs through increased partnerships and more financial resources, better access to technology, improved trade systems, and an increase in resources for capacity building.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Collectively Addressing SDGs to Change an Industry: The Case of the Water Revolution Foundation

Lonneke Roza and Lucas Meijs

1. Introduction

In our efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and resolve our grand challenges, the world faces a funding gap of $2.5 trillion each year[1]—and we will obviously never have enough financial resources to fill this gap. We must, therefore, find innovative ways of addressing our grand challenges, with "all hands on deck." Companies can play a pivotal role in this regard (George et al. 2016).

One way in which companies can help is by making their core business practices more sustainable and inclusive in several respects (Boons and Lüdeke-Freund 2013; Stubbs and Cocklin 2008). The increasing number of companies that are actively committing to being sustainable and inclusive is evidenced in a variety of developments, including the rise of social entrepreneurship (Santos 2012), social intrapreneurship (Geradts and Bocken 2019), the B-Corp movement (Lahneman et al. 2019), and inclusive business models (Lashitew et al. 2019). The answer does not rest exclusively in the market (Eikenberry 2009) or in the government; our grand challenges are far too complex. They call for cross-sector partnerships, hence SDG 17.

Given the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the grand challenges facing society (e.g., providing healthcare, stopping climate change, and producing clean energy), they should be "plausibly addressed through coordinated and collaborative effort" (George et al. 2016, p. 1880). Such efforts can be informed by the existing body of management and business literature on within-industry collaborations aimed at creating more sustainable and inclusive supply chains (Allaoui et al. 2019), as well as by literature on cross-sector partnerships (e.g., Austin and Seitanidi 2012a, 2012b). One potential collaborative effort that has tended to be overlooked, however, involves companies seeking to establish mutual partnerships in order to create positive social change,[2] based on a non-commercial strategy. In this chapter, we examine a relatively

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[1] https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/dsgsm1340.doc.htm (accessed on 19 July 2020).
[2] By referring to social change, we refer to both social and environmental aspects.

new form of multi-stakeholder initiatives aimed at achieving the SDGs: the industry foundation. An industry foundation draws on collective power to leverage resources from the market sector within a particular industry, and to invest them across sectors in NGOs and social enterprises, that can help to create positive social change through the transformation of the entire industry. In this chapter, we examine and discuss the specific dynamics of industry foundations created by companies.

Positive social change refers to "the process of transforming patterns of thought, behavior, social relationships, institutions, and social structure to generate beneficial outcomes for individuals, communities, organizations, society, and/or the environment, beyond the benefits for the instigators of such transformation" (Stephan et al. 2016, p. 1252). In recent decades, scholars have investigated the concept of corporate philanthropy (among others), in order to support the efforts of companies to create positive social change (for reviews, see Gautier and Pache 2015; Liket and Simaens 2015). To date, such work has been the subject of controversy. This is because, while some see corporate philanthropy as a gesture from companies seeking to invest in the public good, others tend to regard it as self-serving and driven more by commercial interest than by the desire to serve the public good (Bertrand et al. 2018). It is at this point that formal organizational structures come into play. Such structures can ensure that the benefits of such collaborative efforts are indeed directed toward the public good, in the pursuit of goals that transcend the direct interests of the instigators. The corporate foundation is one example of such an organizational structure (Herlin and Pedersen 2013; Roza et al. 2020).

A corporate foundation is a separate legal entity that is formally related to a company, but that has a public-benefit mission. It is either the owner of the company or an affiliate established by the company (Bothello et al. 2020; Pedrini and Minciullo 2011; Westhues and Einwiller 2006). Even though such foundations are currently operating around the globe, and despite the fact that their role in the social sector is expanding, corporate foundations have yet to receive much scholarly attention (Pedrini and Minciullo 2011; Roza et al. 2020; Westhues and Einwiller 2006). Even less attention has been paid to situations in which companies join forces to establish a collective foundation with the aim of creating positive social change (e.g., within a specific geographical area) (Maas 2020). This chapter explores why and how companies work collectively to create positive social change. This will contribute to the debate on SDG 17, which is sharply focused on cross-sector partnerships (business and civil society or business and government), with less attention paid to the joint creation of entities within the civil society (i.e., businesses creating civil society). The primary purpose of this chapter is to explain issues that are specifically related to civil society organizations that are at arms' lengths of the corporate world.

Our discussion makes at least three contributions to the current body of literature. First, we provide an initial description of a collaborative governance structure aimed at creating positive social change. Second, we describe the motivations, processes, and conditions needed in order to establish and implement an industry foundation as a force for positive social change. Finally, we open a discussion concerning what can and cannot be regarded as public benefit, against the backdrop of one specific industry foundation, whose objective is to increase the sustainability of the corporate industry. We also open a discussion concerning what various stakeholders might perceive as the responsibility of individual companies, of industry associations, and of public benefit organizations.

To this end, we contextualize collective corporate philanthropy efforts in the form of an industry foundation. We define this type of foundation as a non-commercial investment with which companies seek to address grand challenges and, potentially, to change industry standards. We then explore why and how companies might use this approach, based on a case study of the "Water Revolution Foundation." This non-profit, science-driven organization is a collaborative effort supported by a number of partner companies (including Abeking and Rasmussen, Alexseal, Amels|Damen, Benetti, De Koning Groep, Feadship, Heesen, Lürssen, MB92 Group and Rybovich) within the international superyacht industry. Its objective is to make the industry more sustainable. We conclude the chapter by formulating lessons that can be learned from this case, and highlighting implications for managerial research and practice.

2. Non-Commercial Strategies to Create Positive Social Change

Corporate philanthropy is the most commonly implemented non-commercial strategy for creating positive social change in large multinational, as well as in small and medium-sized, companies throughout the world (Roza 2016). It consists of the voluntary act of making corporate resources available "without any direct commercial benefit, to one or more organizations whose core purpose is to benefit the community's welfare" (Madden et al. 2006, p. 49). Companies are increasingly allocating resources to corporate philanthropy (Campbell et al. 2002). In both the United States and Europe, corporate giving amounts to more than 20 billion USD(Giving USA 2019; Giving in Europe 2017). This amount is expected to continue increasing as investments in corporate philanthropy have been rising since 2007 (Charitable Aid Foundation 2014). These two regions, nevertheless, differ with regard to the relative importance of the contributions. Whereas giving by companies is relatively low compared to other forms of giving in the United States (accounting for only 5% of total giving), it is relatively high in Europe (accounting for 25% of total giving).[3]

Despite differences in the relative proportions of total giving across different regions, the activities that are considered to be part of corporate philanthropy are changing throughout the world. For example, corporate philanthropy has traditionally been manifested in donations of time, money, or means for the public good. At present, however, corporate philanthropy is also understood to include other corporate resources, including core assets and the provision of access to corporate stakeholders, including customers, corporate partners, and the broader public, to which companies have access (e.g., through their media outlets) (Meijs and Voort 2004). While corporate philanthropy was once dominated by grant-making, companies are increasingly becoming engaged in venture philanthropy, including the application of tailored or hybrid financing, non-financial support, and impact management (Buckland et al. 2013).

In addition to the changes outlined above, the act of corporate philanthropy is undergoing changes in terms of the governance structures that companies choose in order to channel their corporate philanthropy, as they become increasingly aware of the importance of creating social impact (Alhouti et al. 2016). Companies are increasingly establishing separate legal entities (e.g., foundations) instead of in-house programs, in order to safeguard their social-impact ambitions and to separate their corporate philanthropy from their day-to-day business, given the inherently different interests of these aspects (social versus commercial). Corporate philanthropy can nevertheless be closely aligned to what a company does or considers important (Bethmann and Schnurbein 2020; European Venture Philanthropy Association 2019; Heitmann et al. 2020). By having a public benefit purpose with no direct commercial goals, corporate philanthropy—particularly as expressed through legal entities like corporate foundations—can be distinguished from other forms of business–society involvement (e.g., corporate sponsorship or corporate social responsibility), which clearly entail social investments, with a direct, inherently commercial goal.

Managing corporate foundations to create positive social change is not easy. The governance structure poses a range of challenges, including: (1) the reason and purpose for which the foundation exists (i.e., commercial or social); (2) the actors

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[3] The figures from Europe and the United States are not entirely comparable, as the definition and measurement of giving differ across studies. They nevertheless provide a good indication of the relative size of this sub-sector within the broader universe of philanthropy.

who actually govern the foundation, and the logics by which they make decisions (i.e., philanthropic or commercial); and (3) the entities to which the foundation is accountable and for what reason (i.e., the company or society, and for business goals or social impact) (Renz et al. 2020). In light of such fundamental governance questions, the management of a foundation established by a single company or entrepreneur is challenging enough. The situation becomes even more difficult for foundations involving multiple partners, each with unique motivations, interests, logic, and so forth. One example of such a complex structure occurs when companies jointly establish a "collective corporate foundation". Maas (2020) studied this phenomenon within the Port of Rotterdam (Netherlands), in which more than 70 companies from various industries, but within the same geographical area, converge their philanthropic giving, with the aim of developing that region. According to Maas, the decision to participate in such a partnership implies the following for a company: (1) loss of control, (2) loss of involvement, and (3) fewer individual organizational benefits (Maas 2020). These elements are usually regarded as important factors for developing regular corporate foundations or philanthropic programs within a particular company. The situation could be even more challenging if the partners are also competitors.

In addition to these challenges, collective involvement in the creation of positive social change could potentially have multiple societal benefits as well. In addition to its direct investments in social innovations, the foundation must have an implicit or explicit potential to persuade the companies that are involved in the foundation to become more inclusive and/or sustainable. While these characteristics clearly increase the complexity of managing such organizations, they also hold a vast potential for generating positive social change.

It is important to investigate these specific forms of collaboration aimed at creating positive social change, as traditional ways of addressing grand challenges have proven insufficient. The adoption of such non-commercial strategies by companies is of particular interest, given the need to look beyond market-based solutions in order to maximize the possibility of investing in solutions to grand challenges. As noted before, this chapter focuses on industry foundations, which can play an important role in helping companies within the same industry to align themselves to the Sustainable Development Goals. This is because industry foundations are more focused, decisive, and involve greater readiness for immediate action than do industry associations, which must represent the interests of a much broader membership (Watkins et al. 2015), despite their role as enablers (Dalziel 2006) and regulators (Vogel 2010) of innovation. Later in this chapter we illustrate the potential and complexity of an industry foundation.

3. Method and Data

The research on which this chapter is based draws on a single instrumental case study (Stake 1995), which is used to illustrate the phenomenon at hand by applying concepts from theory (Yin 2011). We applied a qualitative method, in order to arrive at an in-depth description and explanation. The case focuses on the Water Revolution Foundation, which provides an example of a specific manifestation of a non-commercial collaborative strategy aimed at creating positive social change. The foundation aims to transform the global superyacht industry to make it more sustainable and to preserve marine life (SDG 14). This objective is manifested in activities relating to three focal areas: "promoting new technology and empowering innovation; pro-actively creating the industry's own sustainability agenda, going beyond legislative requirements; and reinvesting in ocean conservation."[4] For our study, we adopted an approach combining a dialogic qualitative interview design with member validation (Harvey 2015; Charmaz 2006). Interviews were semi-structured, including topics such as motives, establishment of the foundation, governance, management and decision-making processes and a future outlook. We started by interviewing the managing director (September 2019, by telephone, about 90 min), and familiarizing ourselves with the case by studying the website, the annual report, and the internal documentation shared with us by the managing director. To improve our understanding of the case, we held a follow-up interview with the managing director (October 2019, by telephone, about 60 min). For the purpose of member validation (Charmaz 2006), we held a third conversation with the managing director (November 2019, by telephone, 30 min, as well as by e-mail), in order to verify that the facts presented in the case provided a faithful reflection of reality.

4. Results

The Case: Water Revolution Foundation

All around the globe, people within the same industry come together at conferences (see e.g., Van Waarden 1992), meeting for coffee to share ideas about joining forces, to set aside their mutual competition in order to collaborate

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[4] https://waterrevolutionfoundation.org/our-plans/ (accessed on 19 July 2020).

on improving the industry and society. Popular ways of pursuing such goals include partnerships (within or across sectors), and the creation of alliances and coalitions. Examples include the Rainforest Alliance[5] and the Palm Oil Transparency Coalition[6] (see also Nikoloyuk et al. 2010), which focus on advancing the industry's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals. Industry foundations constitute a more permanent form of serving both the industry and the broader community. Examples include the industry foundations established in the entertainment industry,[7] the insurance industry,[8]) and—more recently—the superyacht industry.

Around 2015, an Italian sustainability scholar became involved with the Italian superyacht builder Viareggio SuperYachts (VSY). As the first sustainability manager within the superyacht industry, she proposed developing a sustainability measurement tool that could calculate the footprint of superyachts, both existing and in the design or construction phase. As an academic, her intention was to develop this tool not only for this specific organization, but also for the public domain. The tool would, thus, ultimately not be able to enhance the competitive advantage of the company within which it was developed. It would nevertheless serve an industry which, as a whole, was in need of a transition toward more sustainable practices. This would enable the superyacht industry to become a leader within the broader maritime sector. As she began to develop the instrument, she met with other actors in the industry (e.g., competitors, suppliers) at conferences and, more specifically, at the meetings of the Superyacht Builders Association. In early 2017, the secretariat of the industry association brought together a select group of like-minded, forward-thinking industry leaders who were eager to develop disruptive sustainable innovations for the industry as a whole. They saw two major opportunities. First, such innovations could help the industry to respond to institutional pressures and changes in the market that are demanding greater environmental sustainability. Second, such initiatives could enable the industry to take a leading role in preserving marine life (SDG 14), thereby preserving the primary reason for their customers to own superyachts.

At the same time, when considering how to respond to these opportunities, the industry leaders arrived at three realizations. First, change cannot happen through individual organizational efforts alone; the entire industry must hold itself accountable for increasing the sustainability of its practices. Second, creating this

5 https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/ (accessed on 19 July 2020).
6 https://www.palmoiltransparency.org/about/ (accessed on 19 July 2020).
7 https://www.eifoundation.org/ (accessed on 19 July 2020).
8 https://www.iicf.org/ (accessed on 19 July 2020).

change would be unlikely to occur at the needed pace if the efforts were organized through sustainability committees within the industry association. Given the inherent nature of an association, change efforts organized in this manner would most probably be defined by the members with the most conservative notions, regarding the shift to more sustainable practices. A simpler governance construction was needed. Third, the ideas and ambitions that the industry leaders held with regard to changing the industry standards toward greater sustainability would also need broader support from other industry stakeholders (e.g., governments, NGOs, consumers), in addition to the members of the association.

The bold ambitions of some industry leaders and the realization that achieving these ambitions and changing the industry standards would require joint efforts led to the establishment of the Water Revolution Foundation. In addition to the founders, the first anchor partners included nine leading companies within the industry: Abeking and Rasmussen, Alexseal, Amels|Damen, Benetti, Feadship, Heesen, Lürssen, MB92, and Rybovich. The members of this "coalition of the willing" shared the belief that a change in course was needed in order to take better care of the planet, while guaranteeing the future of the industry.

The founders presented their ideas for a new industry foundation at an annual industry forum in November 2018. In their presentation, they formalized their commitment with the notary, who was waiting outside the room with the statutes and by-laws. This marked the official birth of the Water Revolution Foundation.

The foundation's mission is "to drive sustainability in the superyacht industry through collaboration and innovation and leading the way to neutralise its ecological footprint and preserve the world's precious oceans."(Water Revolotion Foundation 2019) The founders consider this mission necessary, as "the superyacht industry uses valuable resources and has an environmental impact. We [as actors in the superyacht industry] have both an obligation and an opportunity to reduce our footprint and future-proof our industry." The Water Revolution Foundation focuses on sustainability, with the goal of enabling their customers to "discover 71% of the planet, free from restrictions and environmental impact." The figure to which this statement refers is the amount of the Earth's surface that is covered by oceans. The foundation thus aims to serve as a platform for closer collaboration within the superyacht industry, in order to accomplish the necessary shift together. The founders further claim that the superyacht industry is in a good position to influence the wider maritime industry, fulfilling an innovative role similar to that of Formula 1 in the auto industry. In addition, the superyacht industry has many affluent customers, who could potentially become influential powers for positive social change, as new technologies can allow superyachts to become prototypes—and even mini-laboratories—supporting research aimed at preserving marine life.

Based on the joint investment of several players within the industry, the founders planned a three-year budget. For 2019, they allocated 250,000 EUR, increasing to 300,000 EUR in 2020 and to 500,000 EUR in 2021. The following pillars of investment were adopted:

1. Technology: "Promoting new technology and empowering innovation to achieve a lighter footprint for the superyachting industry." The foundation is currently supporting the development of the aforementioned science-based tool for assessing the social and environmental impact of yachts. This tool will help those active within the superyacht industry to make more informed decisions in the design and construction of superyachts and to report on measurable progress.
2. Policy: "Pro-actively create the industry's own agenda, beyond legislative developments, initiating progressive steps and actively being part of international and cross-industry worktables." The foundation collects and promotes sustainable solutions by sharing information and best practices. These efforts aim to establish a new industry culture of open-source sustainability. In this light, the foundation seeks to develop and operate an educational program on sustainability, customized primarily to the superyacht industry. In this way, they hope to educate professionals within the industry about sustainability, thereby making sustainability as accessible as possible, while encouraging and facilitating change.
3. Conservation: "Looking after nature for ecosystems' vitality, human well-being and yachting habitats." This pillar involves taking responsibility for protecting the beautiful oceans and improving the planet's well-being. The foundation plans to play an active role in advising industry players on where they should invest their philanthropic resources in order to support the ecosystems of marine life.

After establishing the foundation, the board of directors fine-tuned its governance and organization. To the founders, it was important to have an industry-wide representation on the board, in order to ensure the foundation's legitimacy and influence in every aspect of the industry. The initiating sustainability scientist and a non-profit financial expert were also on the board, given the foundation's aim to increase the sustainability of the superyacht industry. In 2019, the foundation had three main organizational bodies. At the time of writing, the board of directors consisted of seven members (two superyacht builders, a refit shipyard, a designer, a sustainability scientist, an industry media expert, a financial expert, and a non-profit expert). In addition, there was a scientific board that consists of various experts in the areas of sustainability, marine biology and ocean conservation, innovation and technology, and economics. The scientific board advised the board of directors and foundation partners accordingly. The two boards were supported by a secretariat, which was headed by the executive director.

Another decision was to apply for the status of a public benefit organization (PBO; in Dutch: ANBI), with an officially recognized charitable status with the tax authority in the Netherlands. This decision made it necessary for the managing director—one of the original founding board members—to resign from the board, as the regulations for such organizations require distance between the agent and the principal.

5. Discussion

The case of the Water Revolution Foundation provides an illustration of a contemporary development in which companies enter partnerships with each other in new organizational forms within civil society in order to address grand challenges. In addition to the more traditional industry associations, industry foundations embrace specific—perhaps even novel—collective organizational governance structures that enable more progressive action. As demonstrated by the case study, industry foundations can potentially play a variety of roles in creating positive social change. For example, the foundation form enables self-selected companies from the same industry to join forces to address less optimal social and environmental conditions within the industry (thereby making it more sustainable). In addition, a foundation enables its members to address issues that could create a more favorable context for the industry (e.g., ocean conservation), which might not have been recognized by all of the industry members in the association. Finally, an industry foundation can address or resolve issues created by the industry (e.g., the consequences of carbon emissions) on a larger scale than would be possible for an individual corporate foundation.

5.1. A Specific Species?

The industry-level origins and perspectives of industry foundations differentiate them from corporate foundations (Roza et al. 2020) and other collective or corporate arrangements (Maas 2020; Roza et al. 2020), multi-stakeholder initiatives (Dentoni et al. 2018), and non-public-benefit industry associations (Watkins et al. 2015). In contrast to single-donor corporate foundations, industry foundations have multiple donors and participants, each with unique individual motivations and interests, but committed to a collective goal (in our case, increasing the sustainability of the superyacht industry). This characteristic serves to limit the risk that such foundations will focus primarily on serving the donors, as is sometimes the case with regular corporate foundations or partnerships. In theory, an industry foundation could also enjoy greater power and legitimacy within the industry, as they do not advance any individual interests—a common source of criticism concerning corporate foundations (Herlin and Pedersen 2013; Roza et al. 2020).

Industry foundations (or at least the Water Revolution Foundation) also differ from collective corporate foundations and collective business efforts aimed at certain geographical areas (Maas 2020). Such collective corporate foundations are closer to community foundations, especially when their decision-making power is allocated to the local community (through the composition of their governing boards). The Water Revolution Foundation does not have the objective of supporting social issues within a particular geographical area. Instead, it aims to effect change within a particular industry (in this case, as a niche industry). The board members represent the industry and the funders, with the voice of the community (i.e., the social issue at hand) being incorporated through an advisory board.

Given the representation of multiple actors in the organization, industry foundations can be regarded as multi-stakeholder initiatives. They do not usually constitute cross-sector initiatives, however, as they are not actually separate from the corporate world and have no previous existence as civil society organizations. In addition, industry foundations include only actors who are directly involved in the industry (and thus not those who might be affected). Nevertheless, the Water Revolution Foundation does engage in cross-sector partnerships with educational institutions, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations (for a review on cross-sector partnerships, see Austin and Seitanidi 2012a, 2012b). Like any foundation, therefore, industry foundations should be scrutinized with regard to the extent to which they serve a public mission (instead of a private membership mission, as is the case with industry associations). Such scrutiny should thus focus on whether the day-to-day operations of industry foundations serve this mission, instead of the donors. Given that only the industry is represented in the highest decision-making body of an industry foundation, it should be closely monitored in order to ensure that its focus remains fixed on creating positive social change that is inherently beyond the interests of the instigators of such transformation (Stephan et al. 2016).

Finally, the Water Revolution Foundation explicitly positions itself as independent of the industry association. Even more specifically, it was established as a direct response to the limits of the industry association. In this regard, the industry association is intended to support the interests of its full membership, and not all of these members would be eager to accelerate the pace at which the industry is increasing its sustainability. Such differences could increase the costs or complexity of the processes for some who are not yet ready for change. At the same time, however, the case highlights many similarities between the goals of the foundation and the association. This could be a source of confusion concerning the role of the foundation from the perspective of stakeholders (e.g., governments, NGOs, customers, and the general public). Who should be addressed for what? Is there a hidden agenda? Why is the industry foundation not part of the industry association, given that they both support the same industry?

5.2. Public, Private or Limited Benefit?

The Water Revolution Foundation's application for the status of a public benefit organization illustrates another characteristic that distinguishes industry foundations from industry associations, which are based on non-public-benefit purposes. The aims of industry foundations are nevertheless similar to those of individual corporate foundations (Roza et al. 2020). Given that public benefit organizations have a special tax status in many countries, their funders receive tax exemptions. It is therefore becoming increasingly important for the Water Revolution Foundation to explain the actual public benefits of changing industry standards. One potential question of critics might concern why taxpayers should support a foundation that contributes to increasing the sustainability of a commercial industry, given that such a mission would not be tax deductible for donors when adopted by the industry association or one of its member companies. The extent of overlap between the goals of the foundation and those of the industry association could arguably make it more difficult for the foundation to claim that its goal is public instead of private (i.e., for members of the association). Relevant questions in this regard concern why a public benefit organization is needed and why its goals are not the responsibility of the industry association or the individual companies, given that any efforts to achieve these goals will ultimately support their much-needed transition toward sustainability.

Understanding the nuances discussed above requires a refined perspective on social impact, private benefit, and public benefit. The goal of changing industry standards is intended to challenge and transform the current system and to accelerate the process of change. The foundation firmly believes that the industry's logical connection with and contribution to marine life will continue to be absent without changes to the current practices within the commercial industry. Even if the foundation were to invest in NGOs, unless the business practices within the industry are changed, such investments would have to swim against the current of unsustainable practices, thus being unlikely to result in any positive sustainable social change. Like other public benefit organizations (e.g., the C&A Foundation and Fashion for Good in the apparel industry), the Water Revolution Foundation acknowledges the importance of creating social impact—and thus public benefit—by changing how the market sector works and by eventually sharing such knowledge and solutions with other maritime industries.

To this end, the foundation has designed a vision, mission, and goal that go beyond the interest of the industry itself, thereby aiming to create positive social change (Stephan et al. 2016). Such a public benefit mission could enable the foundation to be a vehicle for introducing sustainability into the sector. As a public benefit organization supported by key players within the industry, the foundation is regarded as a credible and legitimate partner within the transition toward sustainability. The foundation can use this position to influence both the committed organizations and all actors involved in the industry. For example, the measurement tool and the database will be available through open access, and thus freely accessible to the public domain, and not exclusively to the foundation's funding partners. It is in this regard—the use of a public benefit foundation to invest long-term (i.e., "patient") philanthropic capital to develop a tool that will become publicly available—that the construction fits within the norms of the philanthropic sector. The challenge for the foundation is to keep this public benefit at heart, and not to fall into mission drift and take on the mantle of the industry association by shifting the primary focus to the interests of the industry.

This study describes a specific collective arrangement between companies within a single niche industry aimed at creating positive social change. It is obviously subject to several limitations, which in turn suggest avenues for future research. First, although the method of data collection was appropriate to the purpose of the study, it could also have been informed by third parties. Second, because the Water Revolution Foundation is relatively new, while the creation of positive social change requires long-term commitment, it is difficult to say whether the foundation will eventually lead to success. It would therefore be interesting to follow the case closely over the coming years to gain a deeper understanding of these organizational structures and their contribution to positive social change and the SDGs, in addition to assessing whether it is actually a promising partnership for development. It would also be interesting to identify any conflicts that might arise among the various stakeholders, in addition to tracking the foundation's impact on its founding companies and the industry at large. This could also provide insight into developments in governance, stakeholder perceptions on the role and functioning of such foundations, and—more broadly—on how we regard social impact.

6. Conclusions

The resolution of grand challenges and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals requires new and innovative collective collaborative arrangements and partnerships (SDG 17). This chapter highlights one potentially promising collective arrangement that is emerging as a way to address grand challenges; the industry foundation. Our analysis of the single case of the Water Revolution Foundation leads to three main conclusions. First, an industry foundation differs from other non-commercial structures rooted in companies (e.g., philanthropy departments, corporate foundations, collective corporate foundations, industry associations, and multi-stakeholder initiatives). Second, the challenges faced by industry foundations are comparable to those faced by corporate foundations with regard to legitimizing their public benefit, as questions could arise concerning the extent to which it exists truly for the public benefit or whether it serves a private interest in disguise (as is quite overt within the industry association). Third, one major potential of an industry foundation is that the actors involved are part of the industry: they know the possibilities and limitations of the industry and are trusted by others within the industry. This type of non-commercial activity or foundation could serve as a "coalition of the willing" by bringing together front-runners who can actually accelerate change within an industry.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, L.R.; methodology, L.R. and L.M.; analysis, L.R. and L.M.; investigation, L.R. and L.M.; resources, L.R. and L.M.; writing—original draft preparation, L.R. and L.M.; writing—review and editing, L.R. and L.M.; project administration, L.R. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Acknowledgments: We would like to acknowledge the Water Revolution Foundation and, Robert van Tol in particular, for providing access to information and thoughts about the foundation. We are grateful to Philine van Overbeeke and Linda Bridges-Karr for their assistance in the preparation of the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Building Strong Partnership for SDGs: Analyzing Participation of Nigerian Stakeholders

Okechukwu Enechi and Philipp Pattberg

1. Introduction

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development constitutes the blueprint for peace, prosperity, and a healthy planet, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the necessary guidance in terms of targets and indicators. SDG 17 emphasizes the critical importance of partnerships for sustainable development, based on the assumption that partnerships will mobilize a wide range of stakeholders in the sharing of knowledge, expertise, technology, and resources towards achieving the global agenda. Multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs), since their emergence in the sphere of global public policy making, influence sustainability governance towards achieving sustainable development. In over two decades, partnerships have emerged not just as actors in sustainability governance but agents with the "ability to prescribe and obtain the consent of the governed" (Biermann et al. 2009). The concept of MSPs is often advocated as one of the most participatory and effective mechanisms available to enhance sustainability governance (Pattberg and Widerberg 2016; Pattberg et al. 2019). However, empirical studies have shown that partnership arrangements are often unable to deliver on their goals (Beirmann et al. 2012) and are challenged by lack of participation and inclusiveness, possibly resulting in unbalanced representation, in particular in the Global South. The region of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is no exception. Limited inclusiveness often results in incoherence in agenda-setting, contested decision-making processes, and suboptimal (and sometimes no) outcomes of partnership initiatives (Compagnon 2012; Gereke and Bruhl 2019; Read et al. 2019). Yet, transitioning to strong partnerships for achieving the SDG 17 requires increased participation and inclusiveness that enhances the role and influence of partnerships towards achieving the SDGs. Participation and inclusive criteria in the design and governance of partnerships guarantee that local context and specific sustainability priorities are taken into account. In addition, participation and inclusiveness increase legitimacy, optimism for effective outcome and confidence of achieving domestic resource mobilization required for the localization of the implementation of the global agenda. Consequently, research needs to urgently explore how multi-stakeholder partnerships can achieve increased participation and inclusiveness by mobilizing underrepresented stakeholders. Against this background, this chapter analyzes inclusiveness and representation related to stakeholders from the SSA region. Using Nigeria as a case study, we explore participation of Nigerian stakeholders in multi-stakeholder partnerships, focusing on perceived obstacles to participation and inclusiveness.

Over 150 stakeholders comprising nation-states, subnational actors, non-governmental organizations (NGO), businesses, and academics participate in the 134 multi-stakeholder partnerships registered, as of 15 December 2019, on the Partnerships for SDGs online platform, self-reporting implementation in Nigeria.[1]

In analyzing the participation and inclusiveness of MSPs in Nigeria, we formulated three key questions: Is the participation of stakeholders in partnerships spread or skewed? Is stakeholders' participation in partnerships participatory and inclusive? And finally, is the participation of local/regional stakeholders adding value to the agenda-setting and decision-making process?

The chapter is organized as follows: first, we will review the Partnerships for SDGs online platform, focusing on MSPs implemented in Nigeria. Second, using survey data on SSA partnerships, we analyze the perceived factors hindering participation in MSPs. Finally, the chapter discusses the impacts of limited participation on partnerships in relation to agenda-setting, decision-making processes, and outcomes. Understanding Nigerian stakeholder participation in multi-stakeholder partnerships will offer an opportunity for the reflection required for building strong and effective partnerships for the SDGs.

2. The Concepts of Participation and Inclusiveness

The United Nations, in adopting the SDGs in 2015, stressed that its successful achievement is dependent on adoption of an inclusive and participatory approach in implementation. Inclusiveness and participation are regarded as key features of pluralism. Participatory and inclusive structures tend to facilitate decision making, implementation, and acceptance as well as ensuring transparency and accountability (Glass and Newig 2019). These concepts are viewed as core criteria towards establishing the legitimacy of decision-making processes that have collective impact. Inclusiveness and participation are viewed from two

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[1] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships (accessed on 29 July 2020).

dimensions. While inclusiveness connotes involvement in a process, participation is understood as the ability of the participants to make inputs to policies (Quick and Feldman 2011). Inclusiveness and participation, therefore, are tools directed at mobilizing affected stakeholders to be represented in the decision-making process (Backstrand et al. 2012). By this means, accelerating a bottom-up governance approach in the implementation of the SDGs is also stressed in the SDGs declaration. Bottom-up governance approaches, characterized by inclusion and participation of stakeholders, are only effective when they are accepted by all stakeholders with measurable representation in decision-making (Kelly et al. 2016). However, while inclusiveness and participation tend to increase the legitimacy of a decision-making process, the effects of inclusiveness and participation criteria on effectiveness vary (Kalfagianni and Pattberg 2013). This is as a result of several factors, including: types of stakeholders participating, pattern of participation, and under or over representation of stakeholders in the decision-making process (Malex et al. 2019; Backstrand et al. 2012). Therefore, satisfying these criteria requires determination of several factors, including type of stakeholders and level of participation that would add value with positive effect on agenda-setting and outcome (Schmalzbauer and Visbeck 2016). However, despite the UN declaration on the implementation of SDGs through multi-stakeholder partnerships via an inclusive and participatory approach, the SSA region is underrepresented in partnerships (Backstrand et al. 2012). Therefore, our study on partnership, focusing on the SSA, will analyze issues of limited participation and inclusiveness; we will also suggest paths towards increased participation of the region in partnerships, thereby accelerating the achievement of SDG 17.

3. Multi-Stakeholder Partnership: Definitions and Meaning

The concept of partnership denotes interactions of both state and non-state actors that is voluntary and collaborative, as well as sharing risks, resources, and responsibility (Pattberg and Widerberg 2016). The social science literature describes public–private partnership or multi-stakeholder partnership as a platform for the interaction of the public and private sphere to provide collective public goods and services (Schaferhoff et al. 2009). Specifically, it is understood as an opportunity for non-state and state actors, including businesses, NGOs, academics as well as subnational actors such as municipalities, cities, and regions to contribute towards achieving global sustainable development goals (Pattberg and Stripple 2008). Through the provision of voluntary commitments alongside the state, partnerships have been identified as a significant part of the global sustainability governance architecture, particularly in the implementation of the SDGs. Regarding definition, there is no universally accepted definition of multi-stakeholder partnership. However, available definitions of partnership have centered on criteria related to actors, functionality, institutionalization, transnationalism, voluntariness, shared risks and responsibilities, goals, collective goods, governance, among others (Pattberg and Widerberg 2016). Partnerships for sustainable development provide governance functions—producing and/or distributing collective goods and services. Therefore, the concept is described as an institutionalized collaboration between the private and public actors aimed at providing collective goods (Schaferhoff et al. 2009).

4. Methods and Material

4.1. Methods

For this study, we analyzed data from the Partnerships for SDGs online platform and conducted a survey of stakeholders participating in partnerships in Nigeria.

First, we started with the overall universe of cases, the more than 5000 partnerships registered on the Partnerships for SDGs online platform (as of 2020), and subsequently, filtered for partnerships indicating activities in Nigeria, which resulted in a total of 134 cases. We, then, categorized the MSPs into having either a primary global or national focus. We relied on the scope of membership and geographic implementation as criteria for the categorization. For example, a partnership with transnational membership and implementation is categorized as globally focused, while a partnership with national membership and implementation scope is categorized as nationally focused. We consequently identified more than 150 unique stakeholders, including NGOs, academics, federal agencies, subnational agencies, and business actors.

Second, the data for analysis of the perceived constraints are sourced from a broader international survey on MSPs, with a special focus on the SSA region, aimed at identifying the regional actors participating in MSPs, their level of participation, their motives, and potential impacts. The survey was based on the SurveyMonkey online survey tool and analyzed 36 Nigeria respondents' responses. While 120 Nigerian stakeholders identified from the online platform participated in the broader survey, 36 (response rate 30%) reacted to the survey question on perceived obstacles to participation in partnership for the SDGs. Categories of stakeholders that responded to the survey are members of the Non-governmental Organization (NGO), Business, Business Association, Academic (Research institutes), and National government agencies. The core criterion to participate in the survey was that respondents were geographically located in SSA. Among other things, the survey asked respondents to rank on a scale from 1 to 4 (1—Most Hindering Factor; 2—More Hindering Factor; 3—Hindering Factor; 4—Less Hindering Factor) what they perceived as hindering factors that constrain stakeholder participation in partnerships.

Using the Partnerships for SDGs online platform has its limitations, as the number of partnerships on the platform changes on daily basis. Therefore, the study relied on data available on the online platform as of 15 December 2019. In addition, the platform does not verify the authenticity of the multi-stakeholder arrangement registered on the platform. However, the platform has become a starting point for measuring stakeholder participation in the implementation of the SDGs.

4.2. Partnerships for SDGs Online Platform

The Partnerships for SDGs online platform was created to register voluntary commitments and MSPs in support of implementing the SDGs. The Partnerships for SDGs online platform is a UN global registry of voluntary commitments and multi-stakeholder partnerships, managed by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSDG/DESA). The platform is also expected to facilitate knowledge and expertise sharing among stakeholders and partnerships. Actors interested in registering partnerships or voluntary commitments are expected to satisfy the SMART criteria. The SMART criteria require that the registered initiative should be specific, measurable, achievable, resource-based, and time-bound. Aligning the MSP initiatives registered on the platform to the SMART criteria requires that initiatives are directed at contributing to achieving goals and targets with measurable indicators. It also requires that registered initiatives are achievable with attainable goals, secured resources, and time-specific deliverables. Generally, the platform has emerged as one of the key tools in monitoring and tracking SDG 17 implementation. The Partnerships for SDGs online platform visualizes an improved number of partnerships commitments linked to achieving the global goals, particularly in the SSA region.

Globally, over 5000 partnership commitments are registered on the platform as of 15 December 2019, focused on achieving one or several goals of the SDGs. Out of this, 171 indicated implemented activities in Kenya, 127 indicated implementing in South Africa, and 134 indicated implemention in Nigeria. This is an increase of 11 partnerships registered on the online platform (approx. 9% increase in number of partnership commitments) from 123 in May 2018, self-reporting implementation in Nigeria. Figure 1 above shows the distribution of MSPs that self-reported implementation in sub-Saharan African countries. Nigeria is strategic in the achievement of the SDG in the sub-Saharan African region. With its current growth rate and sustainable development challenges, implementation of Agenda 2030 in Nigeria will have effects on the SSA region as a whole, hence, the selection of Nigeria as a case study for this study.

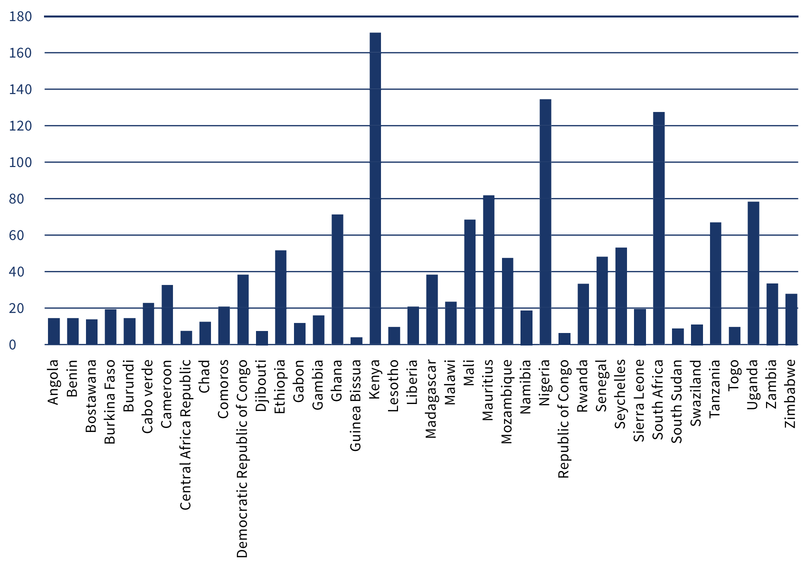

Figure 1. Multi-Stakeholders Partnerships Implementation by SSA Countries. Data sourced from Partnerships for SDGs online platform (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships).

As presented in Figure 2, the 134 partnerships implemented in Nigeria comprised of initiatives linked to one or more of the SDGs. SDG 5 (39) has the highest number of multi-stakeholder partnerships, followed by SDG 4 (33), SSDG 3 (32), and SDG 1 (31). SDG 17, which is on strengthening partnerships for the implementation of the global agenda, has 31 partnership commitments. SDG 10 (8) has attracted the lowest number of partnerships. In short, partnerships may favor implementation of one goal over others. For instance, more partnerships are focused on addressing SDG 5 (achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls) than partnerships linking their actions to addressing SDG 10 (reduce inequality within and among countries). While Nigeria continues to highlight the importance of implementing innovative initiatives in its energy sector and solving cross cutting environmental, social, and economic issues, only 16 partnerships currently indicate that their actions are focused on SDG 7 (ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all).

However, a visualization of the number of multi-stakeholder partnerships on the platform tends to suggest increased optimism and hope of accelerating the implementation of the global sustainability agenda (Chan et al. 2019). Observing all shades of partnership arrangements on the platform suggests the involvement of all stakeholders, thereby increasing the optimism of bridging implementation gaps and addressing democratic deficits in sustainability governance process, particularly satisfying the criteria of representative, participatory, and inclusiveness norms (Pattberg and Widerberg 2016). Yet, are the arrangements focusing on Nigeria inclusive and participatory?

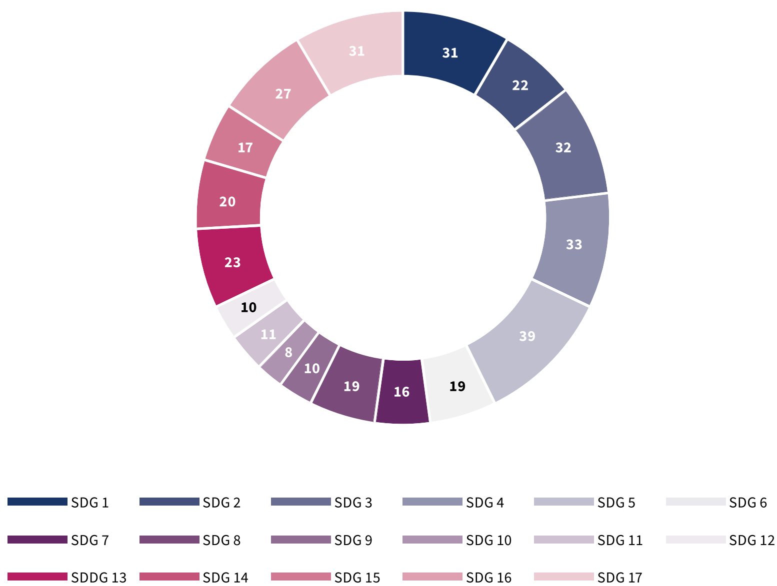

Figure 2. MSP Initiatives by SDGs (Partnerships for SDGs online Platform—data sourced from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships).

4.3. Case Study Context—Nigeria

Nigeria is situated in Western Africa and is the largest economy in the SSA region, with an estimated GDP of 376.284 billion US Dollars. The country is the largest producer of crude oil in Africa and the sixth largest producer in the world, making it a key member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Nigeria has an estimated population of about 200 million with a projection that the population will practically double in 2050 to about 411 million. With this projected population, Nigeria would be the third most populous country in 2050, behind India and China. Regarding political structure, Nigeria is divided into 37 subnational entities (states) and 774 local governments. Despite its position in the region, Nigeria is confronted with several sustainable development challenges. For example, Nigeria is confronted with sustainable development issues such as high poverty rate, high youth unemployment, irregular migration, low access to electricity (with only 54.4% of population having access nationally and only 1 in 4 persons connected to the grid in the rural areas), and environmental degradation arising from exploitation of fossil fuel (OSSAP-SDGs 2017; SEforALL n.d.; The World Bank n.d.). Nigeria's environmental sustainability challenges are diverse and varied, ranging from intense flooding as a result of a rise in sea level in Lagos and other cities in the southern and north central regions; desertification rampaging the northern part of the country; the shrinking of Lake Chad in the northeast region of the country. These challenges are causing human insecurity in the form of loss of livelihood, dwindling agricultural production, and in some instances, dangerous tensions and armed conflicts arising from climate change-induced migration. Like other sub-Saharan African countries, Nigeria suffers from resource constraints, weak institutional capacities, infrastructural deficits, and is fraught with a fragile socio-political environment that is hindering efforts towards tackling these problems. Nigeria, like other countries in the SSA, is active in the implementation of the SDGs and incorporated them into its national policies and strategies. For example, Nigeria has, since the inception of the SDG, embarked on policy reforms aimed at harmonization and integration of SDGs into its development plan at the national level. Nigeria presented its national voluntary review (NVR) in 2017 and 2020, detailing SDG implementation progress; Nigeria has also developed a homegrown analytical framework, Integrated Sustainable Development Goals (iSDG), for assessing policymaking impact on the SDGs. In recognition of the importance of partnership in the implementation of the SDGs and to accelerate achieving SDG 17, Nigeria's National Strategy provides an institutional framework for engaging stakeholders, through Private Sector Group on SDGs, Development Partners on SDGs, and Civil Society Advisory Group on SDGs (OSSAP-SDGs 2017).

5. Results

5.1. Analysis of Stakeholder Participation in Partnerships

5.1.1. Stakeholder Participation: Spread or Skewed?

In total, 134 out of over 5000 partnerships and commitments registered on the Partnerships for SDGs platform self-reported that they are implementing (some of) their activities in Nigeria. The activities differ in terms of their composition of actors, focus of initiative, and geographical scope of implementation. While some of the partnerships are global in character (i.e., transnational membership and implementation scope), others are national in character with national membership and scope of implementation. As presented in Figure 3, 45% of the MSPs that self-report implementing (some of) their activities in Nigeria are nationally focused, while 55% are globally focused. A simple view of the different multi-stakeholder partnerships registered on the platform, without any systematic scrutiny, suggests improved participation and inclusiveness of stakeholders. Against this background, it may be concluded that we are witnessing, in fact, a bottom-up governance approach, as envisioned in SDG 17. However, our critical analysis of the data suggests that membership of most of the multi-stakeholder partnerships on the platform does not represent a spread in participation but that membership remains skewed. First, in terms of spread, analysis of the data shows that the membership of global focused partnerships is dominated by stakeholders from the Global North. Second, the nationally focused partnerships are dominated by non-government organization with limited membership of stakeholders at the subnational and local level. In addition, the nationally focused partnerships have no clearly defined governance structure, required for coordination and policy influencing. Generally, our review of the membership of partnerships implemented in Nigeria indicates unbalance. Yet, proponents of multi-stakeholder partnerships in policy making have often pointed at the number of partnerships on the platform as an indication of inclusion and participation. However, numbers alone do not translate into an inclusive and participatory partnership, thereby posing fundamental governance risk to policy makers. For example, skewed participation, rather than strengthening the capacity of participating stakeholders, may distort equitable distribution of development and, thereby, strengthen business interests using the partnership platform (Mert and Chan 2012).

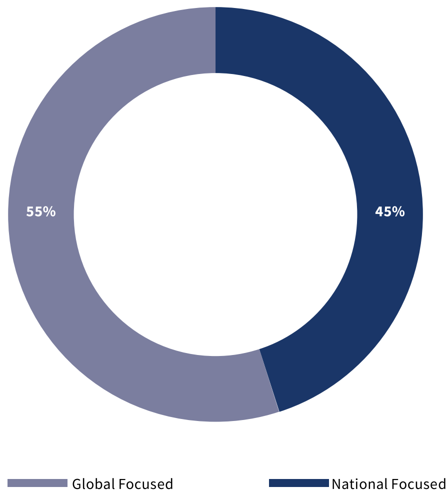

Figure 3. Implementation scope of MSPs in Nigeria (Partnerships for SDGs online Platform—Data sourced from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships).

5.1.2. Participation and Inclusivity

Visualizing stakeholder participation shows diverse participation of stakeholders ranging from state actors to non-state actors, including NGOs, businesses, business associations, academics, and community development associations. More than 150 stakeholders participate in 134 partnerships registered on the platform and indicate implementation in Nigeria. While NGOs and the federal government (through their agencies) dominate membership and leadership of (nationally focused) partnerships, local government and community level-based actors are, by and large, absent. All in all, NGOs, nation-state actors, and business are the dominant participants (88%) in partnerships. In addition, a review of membership of partnerships shows that globally focused partnerships are dominated by national actors. Another finding is that participation of subnational actors and academics is limited, and that local governments are absent from partnerships. Figure 4 below illustrates the distribution of stakeholders' participation, showing that 43% are NGOs and 26% are business stakeholders, while 19% are nation-state agencies. The partnerships that the subnational actors participate in are usually project-specific, designed, and coordinated by international organizations such as UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank, etc. This trend does not support the bottom-up sustainability governance approach as envisaged in the implementation of the SDGs, which stresses participation and inclusiveness, in the implementation of global Agenda 2030, thereby posing major governance risk to the multi-stakeholder partnership arrangements, particularly in the design of its initiatives. First, the trend makes it difficult to and complicated in reflecting local priorities into its implementation and decision-making process. Second, the NGOs participating in most of the nationally focused partnerships often are constrained by lack of structure, resources, and capacity, thereby posing an accountability risk. In addition, the lack of participation and inclusiveness, for instance, may further exacerbate uneven global distribution of knowledge, which equips stakeholders for quality participation (van der Molen 2018).

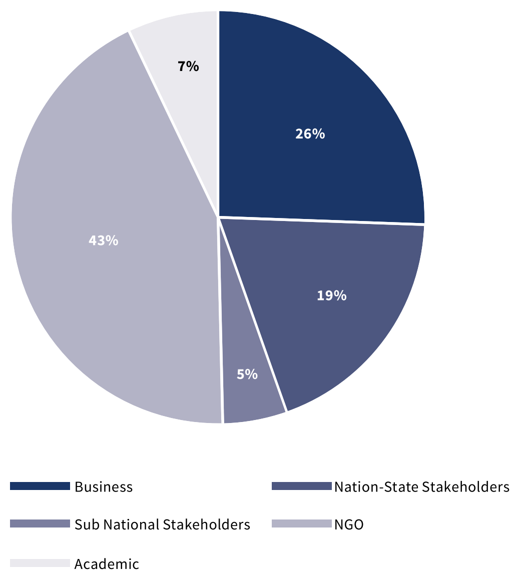

Figure 4. Category of Stakeholders Participating in MSPs (Partnerships for SDGs online Platform—Data sourced from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships).

5.1.3. Quality Participation: Value Added or Rhetoric?

SDG 17 emphasizes that inclusive and participatory stakeholder participation through partnerships will add value to the implementation process of global goals. It is assumed that such a scenario will stimulate the bottom-up governance approach, thereby increasing ownership and acceptance criteria. However, contrary to this view, in sub-Saharan Africa, participation in and membership of partnerships have little or no impact on the partnership performance and outcome (Szulecki et al. 2012; Compagnon 2012; Mawejje 2019). In recognition of this deficit, it is argued that state actor involvement and leadership of multi-stakeholder partnerships may lead to improved performance and outcome, particularly with their democratic legitimacy and bureaucratic structure. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, there is no empirical outcome to support this assumption, as state-dominated partnerships are constrained by several factors, including limited resources and expertise as well as weak institutions that impede accountability and transparency. Second, visualization of the Partnerships for SDGs platform shows that even the nationally focused partnerships, dominated by nation-state actors, may not be creating any (valuable) outcome. For example, a cursory view of the reporting dashboard of the platform shows that there are few reports from national focused MSPs that indicate activities and results. In addition, following initiative registration on the platform, there is little guarantee that the initiatives have the resources required for implementation. This often raises questions about the partnerships and voluntary commitment approach in Nigeria, particularly with the argument that the approach in the Global South may not deliver on the optimism due to several factors, including the inadequacy of capacity, resource, and institutional accountability criteria (Okereke et al. 2018).

5.1.4. Perceived Obstacles: Why Is Participation Limited?

Achieving Goal 17 requires an inclusive and participatory approach towards implementation of the SDGs. The value of participation is not only measured in quantitative terms regarding the number of stakeholders participating in partnerships, but also as the value of such participation. Against this background, this study identified and ranked stakeholder perceptions on what they consider obstacles constraining participation in MSPs. The responses identified four key factors: resources, capacity, knowledge, and governance structure of partnerships. As depicted in Figure 5, the respondents ranked resources as the biggest obstacle, followed by capacity, knowledge, and governance structure of partnerships. It is not surprising that resources are the most frequently perceived obstacle, particularly as it determines, among others, the cost for effective stakeholder inclusion in the participation process (Aggraeni et al. 2019). Capacity and knowledge gaps are perceived as other key obstacles that constrain the effective participation of stakeholders from the Global South (Szulecki et al. 2012). In an attempt to bridge this gap, over 80% of the partnerships visualized on the UN platform commit to capacity and knowledge-based initiatives. Governance structure of partnerships, including, for example, functioning secretariat, is identified as one of the key ingredients in achieving effective design and impact making partnerships. However, the respondents in this study perceived governance structure of partnerships as a less constraining factor.

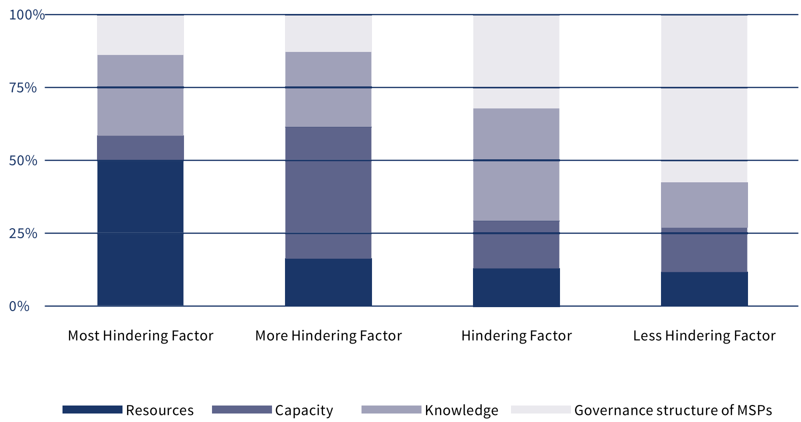

Figure 5. Perceived Obstacles to participation in MSPs (SSA in Partnerships for SDGs Survey, 2019).

6. Discussion

The concept of multi-stakeholder partnerships is a result of a shift in global public policy and recognition that the SDGs objectives are best achieved by the design of a multi-stakeholder approach that integrates non-state actors in the policymaking and implementation process (Marx 2019). The SDGs implementation is anchored on the agenda that tends to advance the interest of the most underrepresented in the society through a multi-stakeholder approach that increases inclusiveness and participation in governance arrangement and process. However, empirical studies have highlighted the limitation of partnerships' performances, particularly in delivering their commitments. Some studies argue that these limitations vary in type of partnerships, citing empirical evidence that state-led and dominated partnerships are more likely to perform at suboptimal levels (Shin et al. 2017). In the case of sub-Saharan Africa, studies show that suboptimal performance is not restricted to only state-led partnerships but almost all partnerships, as they have limited or no output and outcomes (Compagnon 2012). For example, a recent study of global partnership, EITI, suggested that membership of the sub-Saharan African states has little or no impact in achieving the network's key commitments (Mawejje 2019). Limitations of partnership performances can be traced to the question of participation and inclusiveness due to several factors, including skewed participation, limited stakeholder participation, and lack of quality participation.

First, in quantitative terms, partnership arrangements, often are not inclusive and participatory enough, lacking the capability to galvanize the underrepresented into partnership participation with consequences on agenda-setting and decision-making processes. Both globally and nationally focused partnership arrangements have limited participation of subnational and local level-based stakeholders. Yet, there is optimism that subnational and local level-based stakeholders are key platforms towards achieving a bottom-up governance approach in the implementation of the SDGs, particularly in achieving localization of SDG implementation. For instance, the subnational and local level-based stakeholders play a key role in enabling collaborating arrangement and linkage platforms that facilitate plan for the achievement of the global sustainability agenda (Jorgensen et al. 2015; Hsu et al. 2019). Both levels of governance are also considered as places where interventions and policies for sustainability governance are experimented and developed into scalable actions (Van der Heijden 2019; Koehler et al. 2018). Setting an agenda for partnership initiatives, relying on local actions, will offer an opportunity for a bottom-up governance approach, reflecting local priorities, and demonstrating inclusiveness and participation. Furthermore, the participation of relevant stakeholders does not only engender inclusiveness but encourages diverse opinions and inputs in the agenda-setting and decision-making process, thereby enriching and adding value to the process. Yet, it is observed that the partnership agenda is often in conflict with local priorities and needs, with different actors pursuing different agendas from different perspectives (Gereke and Bruhl 2019). Generally, the study strengthens the argument that stakeholders of the country, like other stakeholders of the Global South, are less represented in partnerships, thereby reinforcing the critical questions of legitimacy, accountability, and transparency of the decision-making process (Pattberg and Enechi 2009). However, the discussions about the limitations in inclusiveness and participation should not be restricted to the numerical balancing of stakeholder participation (Chan et al. 2019). The discussion must be also extended to building and strengthening of platforms for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and identification of scalable actions at the local level as well increased discussing strategies for the realization of local resource mobilization indicators of the SDG 17.

Second, the limited inclusiveness and participation that characterize multi-stakeholder partnerships often render its decision-making processes contestable (Chan et al. 2019). This, again, brings to the fore questions regarding the legitimacy, accountability, and transparency of the partnership decision-making process (Pattberg and Enechi 2009). For instance, there are concerns that limited inclusiveness and participation of actors may encourage the hijack of the decision-making process by powerful actors and influence decisions that serve narrow interests, thereby distorting development distribution and increasing inequalities (Okereke 2018; Pattberg et al. 2019; Pattberg 2010). The perception of the effective decision-making process of multi-stakeholder partnerships arrangement is strengthened when it is particularly characterized by diversity and inclusiveness with a measurable representation of the underrepresented (Kelly et al. 2016). The participation of Nigeria-based NGOs in multi-stakeholder partnerships, in quantitative terms, raises the optimism of ameliorating the participatory limitation and ensuring effective representation in the decision-making process. Particularly, as NGOs are described as playing the key role of contributing technical capacity support to decentralized and participatory governance as well providing a grassroots linkage and platform, where the marginalized and excluded promote their interest and nurture innovation (Cook et al. 2017; Banks et al. 2015). This assumed role of the NGOs ideally ensures the emergence of a bottom-up governance approach in the decision-making process. However, NGOs in the Global South are significantly constrained by several variables, including lack of resources, knowledge, and capacity to participate in decision making and deliver on their functions without seeking 'external' assistance. Additionally, in sub-Saharan Africa, poor networking and cooperation among NGOs constrain their ability to influence the decision-making process (Ariti et al. 2018). Gaps in the societal awareness and knowledge of sustainable development issues fuel perceptions that also limit space for participation and inclusiveness. For example, the skewed participation and limited inclusiveness in the decision-making process often strengthen the perception among NGOs based in Nigeria that partnership is a Global North affair (Bansard et al. 2016). Bridging the societal awareness and knowledge gap will empower stakeholders and enhance quality participation in partnerships.

Third, achieving improved outcomes is one of the major challenges confronting partnership arrangements, and is more obvious in sub-Saharan Africa (Compagnon 2012; Beisheim et al. 2014). This phenomenon is, again, traced to several structural features, including lack of capacity and resources of stakeholders in the region to effectively participate. In addition, the global partnerships with the capacity and resources often overlook the locale-specific contextual priorities and needs in its agenda-setting process, especially in engaging diverse stakeholders at the local level and utilizing local-level knowledge in the design of partnerships (Schmalzbauer and Visbeck 2016). Therefore, achieving improved outcomes requires the creation of an inclusive and participatory space. The burden should not only be on the stakeholders of the region to voluntarily participate in partnerships but also the responsibility of the global focused partnerships to put in place some critical strategies aimed at galvanizing broad stakeholder participation. First, what is needed is a deliberate strategy that creates a linkage platform for collaboration aimed at exchanging knowledge and sharing experiences between nationally and globally focused partnerships. A collaborative arrangement that enables representative, participatory, and inclusive interactions would lead to improved outcomes, accountability, and increased transparency. Second, there is a need for globally focused partnerships to engage in a bottom-up approach in the design of its programs through the identification of scalable actions at the local level. While this may fit into the argument for a meta-governance structure of partnerships (Pattberg and Widerberg 2016), it also helps in enabling an inclusive and participatory bottom-up governance approach envisaged in SDG 17.

7. Conclusions

Achieving SDG 17 is a challenging task, particularly as the successful implementation of this goal transforms the implementation of the entire SDGs. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are at the center of SDG implementation, and it is assumed that this approach will address the inclusiveness and participation deficit in global sustainability governance, thereby achieving the 'no one is left behind' principle of the SDG declaration. However, participation deficits in multi-stakeholder partnerships persist, particularly in the Global South and the SSA region. Unbalanced partnerships are less likely to create lasting impact towards achieving the SDGs and confronting sustainable development challenges in the SSA region. With the SSA region underrepresented in MSPs, in particular, in partnership agenda-setting and decision-making processes, SDG implementation is at risk. Therefore, achieving the implementation of SDG 17 requires deliberate policy strategies that strengthen partnerships; mobilize stakeholders at different scales to participate in partnerships; create and enhance linkages, and capacity building platforms. Furthermore, in recognition of the important role of the subnational and local level in sustainability governance and their gross limited participation in partnerships, there should be a deliberate policy strategy targeted at mobilizing and enabling stakeholders at these levels to participate. This approach would lead to increased inclusiveness and participation as well as to a more bottom-up implementation approach. These strategies for enabling inclusive and participatory partnerships are not exhaustive but are intended to prompt further research on the subject of partnerships for SDGs implementation and sub-Saharan Africa, especially with the limited scholarly research focusing on sustainability governance and the SSA region (Gerlak et al. 2020). Consequently, further research should focus on scrutinizing the complexity of unbalanced actor participation, the type of stakeholder participating, understanding local context and priorities that enable participation as well the role of the subnational and local level; what are the motivations for participation; what platform is suitable for galvanizing and mobilizing participation and how to increase participation and inclusiveness towards the realization of SDG 17.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, P.P. and O.E.; methodology, P.P. and O.E.; formal analysis, O.E.; data curation, O.E.; writing—original draft preparation, O.E.; writing—review and editing, P.P.; visualization, O.E.; supervision, P.P. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Institutional and Policy Framework in the Governance of Capture Fisheries and Its Bearing on Co-Management: Experiences from Zambia

Francis M. Chama and Jacob Mwitwa

1. Introduction

The management of capture fisheries mainly focuses on the sustainable production of fish resources (Arthur 2005). It is in line with this strategy that the concept of fisheries co-management was introduced on open access fisheries such as Lake Bangweulu fishery. Open access fishing is a condition where access to fish harvesting on a fishery is unrestricted (OECD 2001), while capture fishing is the manner in which fish is captured directly from its natural habitat. Co-management can broadly be defined as a participatory arrangement where management responsibilities are shared between the government and fishing communities (Nielsen et al. 2004). It is assumed that effective governance and sustainable fisheries management can only be achieved through stakeholder participation and partnerships. Evidence to date indicates that stakeholder's involvement in fisheries management can significantly contribute to maintaining or restoring ecological integrity and community well-being (Til and Banda 2002). However, multi-stakeholder partnerships in fisheries co-management are challenged by weak institutional and policy frameworks that fail to improve local livelihoods and achieve sustainable fisheries management in poor communities.

The chapter explores how failure to establish a strong institutional framework and supportive policies has led to conflicts between partners and lack of support by some partners of the co-management initiative. It further examines the appropriateness of a fisheries policy focused on conservation in a poor fishing community. The information generated from this research shows how strong partnerships in co-management can contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 17 (SDG 17), and how the lack of strong partnerships can lead to its failure. The SDG 17 emphasizes the critical importance of partnerships for sustainable development, based on the assumption that partnerships organize a wide range of stakeholders in the sharing of knowledge, expertise, technology and additional resources towards achieving the global development agenda (Kaustuv et al. 2018). There has been confusion around the means of implementation and how to effectively engage different stakeholders, in the process of transformation for sustainable development (Horan 2019).

Co-management calls for partnerships between various stakeholders that would foster effective and sustainable management (Armitage et al. 2007). This demands for appropriate institutional frameworks with well-defined roles for partners, and a working relationship between them that interlinks the various partners (Stewart 2004). However, studies have shown that multi-stakeholder partnerships are often challenged by the nurturing of a working relationship based on trust, mutual respect, open communication, and understanding among stakeholders (Overseas Development Institute 2003), and this can often lead to mistrust and suspicion between facilitators and local communities. Unless a relationship of mutual trust between various stakeholders is established and maintained, it is unlikely that even the simplest co-management regime can survive (Pomeroy et al. 2001).

Partnerships in fisheries co-management are challenged by weak institutional and policy frameworks that fail to improve local livelihoods and achieve sustainable fisheries management in poor communities (Njaya 2007). There has been little information available to help achieve sustainable fisheries management in poor communities of developing countries, as the introduction of co-management in some poor communities such as Bangweulu has been looked upon with suspicion by the local communities, and there has been resistance towards its introduction and progression. This kind of experience can be viewed as a crisis of governance (Louisa et al. 2011; Acheson 2006). Therefore, there is a need to establish ways of nurturing strong partnerships, based on trust, mutual respect, open communication, and understanding among stakeholders.

The primary objective of the current fisheries policy in Zambia, similar with other developing countries, is not that of uplifting the living standards of impoverished fishing communities through appropriate strategies. Its focus is on increasing fish production and promoting sustainable utilization of fisheries resources, thereby contributing to the economy through the generation of employment, income and improved availability of fish (The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative 2004). With this approach, the focus is too broad with less consideration of local community development. The consideration of local community development would address issues of poverty and underdevelopment, by means of extending the potential benefits of fisheries resources to poor rural fishing communities.

This chapter explores how the failure to establish strong institutional frameworks and supportive policies can lead to conflicts between partners and lack of support by some partners of the co-management initiative, hence posing challenges on achieving SDGs. It also shows ways in which strong partnerships for sustainable development can be formed.

The chapter has been divided into six sections. Section one introduces the research area, while section two covers the conceptual framework, section three the research methodology that was used, section four presents the findings, section five discusses the findings, and section six draws conclusions of the chapter.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Co-management can broadly be defined as the sharing of responsibility and authority between the state and resource-users, but often involves collaboration between various stakeholders, including different government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), research organizations, private enterprises and civil society organizations (Louisa et al. 2011; Carlsson and Berkes 2005). While co-management now attracts widespread attention around the world, its practical implementation frequently falls short of expectations (Melissa et al. 1999). Lying between two management strategies, the centralized control and community-based management systems, co-management covers a broad spectrum of management arrangements. Co-management in itself is not a single strategy to solve all problems of fisheries management, but provides a set of alternative management strategies appropriate for certain areas and situations (Izadian 2005). It is therefore important to have a more comprehensive understanding of co-management based on the challenges experienced in the actual implementation which have been experienced in recent years. Understanding this would highlight the suitable approaches for achieving SDGs through partnership transformation. The main issues to address are the types of partnerships needed to achieve sustainable management, and how these partnerships can be enabled and ensured (Horan 2019).

In this study, co-management is conceptualized as a participatory form of fisheries governance that could be effective through transparency, mutual trust, accountability and fairness during policy formulation planning, implementation and sharing of benefits, and should have an effective institutional framework. Co-management is an arrangement where the power and responsibility to manage a fisheries resource is shared between user groups, NGOs, traditional authorities and government (Donda and Njaya 2007). Co-management cannot work effectively without supportive policies and legislation. According to Pomeroy et al. (2001), for co-management initiatives to be successful, the basic concern of government action is to establish supportive legislation, policies and structures. Policies and legislation need to clearly spell out jurisdictions and control for co-management.

This would provide legitimacy to property rights and decision-making arrangements for effective management. It would define and clarify local responsibility and authority. Not only that, but it would clarify the rights and responsibilities of partners, support local enforcement and set up accountability mechanisms that would provide stakeholders with legal rights to organize and make arrangements related to their needs (Pomeroy et al. 2001). The local communities expect to see a transparent system, with accountability and immediate benefits if they are to actively participate in fisheries management (Berkes 2010). These should be observed at policy formation, planning and implementation levels of fisheries management. The ideal governance system would only be achieved once good policies are in place with a supportive legislation. At this point, the objectives should be clear and acceptable to all stakeholders and all of them ready to support the management efforts. This would create an enabling environment that would lead to sustainable fisheries management and, thereby, the attainment of SDG 2, which seeks to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, as well as SDG 17, which is aimed at strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development. Co-management initiatives in most developing countries have been supported by international development agencies whose partnerships need revitalization through successful program outcomes and impacts. It would also contribute to attaining SDG 15, which is aimed at promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Therefore, building strong co-management partnerships would positively contribute to various SDGs both directly and indirectly. The research conceptual framework is shown in Figure 1.

While management arrangements made by government agencies often lack the local knowledge and experience of fishers and other user groups, these groups often lack the scientific and legislative knowledge that government agencies can provide to effectively manage the fisheries resources (Pomeroy et al. 2001). Therefore, managing fisheries resources on a cooperative basis involving all the stakeholder institutions has often proved to be a preferable alternative to government or local level management systems (Watt 2001). A good institutional framework would bring about institutional collaboration and participation of stakeholders that would lead to the good governance of capture fisheries.

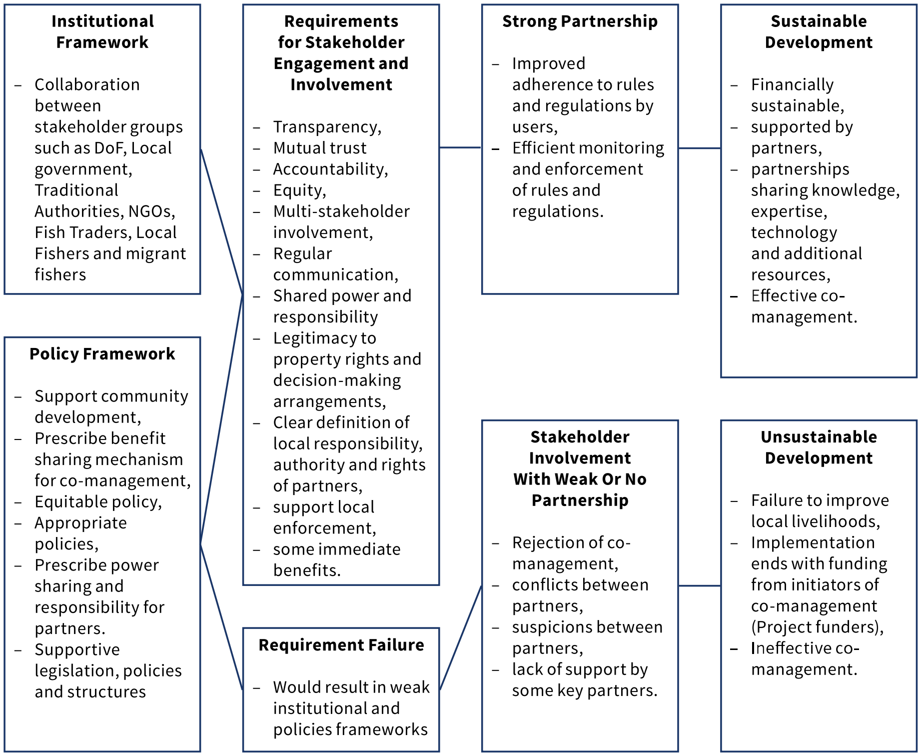

Figure 1. Conceptual framework on how to build strong partnerships for sustainable development. Source: Own illustration.

Government involvement in fisheries management has the benefit of contributing unbiased views and opinions concerning fisheries management issues, whereas fisheries resource users are more likely to be capable of making more equitable regulations than (ECA 2007). The local fishers and other resource users are intimately involved in the industry, and they are in a better position to respond to the special needs, demands and interests of individual fishers and other user groups. Therefore, there is little chance that fisheries regulations will succeed, unless the fishers and other fisheries resource users actively support them (Donda and Njaya 2007; Ostrom 2010). If government regulations are not supported by the fishers and resource user, they will find ways to bypass them, and the government will incur costs in monitoring and law enforcement. The fishers and resource users are more likely to respect the rules and regulations if they are involved when making them (Watt 2001; Ogwang et al. 2009).

In terms of the appropriateness of the fisheries policy and legislation, the fisheries policy, management rules and regulation need to be suitable for the local conditions. The policy and legislation are only appropriate if they promote accountability, transparency and equity between all stakeholders (Donda and Njaya 2007). In this case, it would be accepted and supported by the stakeholders, and is considered as a form of good governance. In this chapter, the appropriateness of the fisheries policy refers to the perception of user groups over the suitability of the fisheries policy in terms of management rules and regulation for the sustainable management of fisheries resources. This is measured in terms of its provisions for accountability on decision makers, transparency through communication and equitability of rules and regulations between stakeholders.

There is need for fruitful dialogue between stakeholders (Pomeroy et al. 2001), a strong political will in support of co-management, effective fisheries management rules, stakeholder involvement in decision making, and either decentralization, deconcentration or devolution of management authority and responsibility to local communities. According to Armitage et al. (2007), the distribution of authority and responsibilities among the various partners in fisheries management needs to be understood for the governance of capture fisheries to be effective. The participation of all stakeholders during the implantation of co-management helps to empower local communities with some authority and responsibilities (Arthur 2005). For it to work effectively, the Traditional Authorities should also be empowered with some authority and responsibilities. There must be a clear conflict resolution mechanism (Pomeroy 2007). Regular communication between stakeholders is vital during the implementation stage, as it helps to show transparency and bring about the mutual understanding of issues between stakeholders. A sustainable fisheries management system ought to be able to generate its own funds, plan for its activities, implement them, monitor and control fishing activities for the benefit of all stakeholders (Njaya 2007). However, those preparing the appropriate laws to manage a fisheries rights system must be prepared for a process of ongoing change and consequent amendment, as the system requirements are continuously evolving (Stewart 2004).

Responsibilities and power can be shared between central government and local communities in the form of co-management. The sharing of governance responsibilities through stakeholder participation and ability to learn from experience are among the growing trends in environmental management (Berkes 2010). However, experiences from a number of African countries highlight challenges that relate to transparency and accountability, initiation processes, membership, scale, and power struggles (Njaya 2007). The approach to achieve good governance of fisheries resources must be open and transparent, coherent and integrative, inclusive and communicative, as well as equitable and ethical. Transparency can greatly contribute to the legitimacy and acceptance of decisions and therefore compliance (Arthur 2005). The implementers of such arrangements must be accountable, efficient and responsive (Uhlendahl et al. 2011). Overall, co-management should be self-sustainable, as it is part of a broader worldwide trend of indigenous people making contributions of their knowledge and methods to environmental governance (Norman 2011).

3. Materials and Method

3.1. Location of Research Area

The study was undertaken from fishing communities around Bangweulu fishery in the Samfya district of Luapula province. Bangweulu is a complex lake found in the northern part of Zambia (10°15′–12°30′ S and 29°30′–30°30′ E), made up of five inter-connected lakes; Chifunabuli, Walilupe, Kampolombo, Kangwena and the main Lake Bangweulu. The Chambeshi River, which is the supplier of water to the lake, enters Lake Bangweulu through the swamps in Nsamba area from the north-eastern direction, while Luapula River outflows the Bangweulu in the southern direction. The permanent swamp on the eastern part of the lake is one of the largest in Africa, covering over 5000 km^2, taking up 16% of the Bangweulu, which reduces to 10% in the dry season. Figure 2 shows the location of Lake Bangweulu on the map of Zambia and the location of chiefdoms sampled.

The major economic activities around the Bangweulu area were fishing and arable farming (Central Statistics Office 2013). Over $^2/_3$ of the Bangweulu fishery falls under Samfya district, which has a population of 174,906 (Central Statistics Office 2013), with over 15,000 people either directly or indirectly connected to fishing and the fish trade (Mbewe 2007b). There are 13 taxonomic families of fish species, of which more than 10 species are commercially exploited (Kolding et al. 2003). There have been general concerns that the fish stocks are heavily exploited (Til and Banda 2002).

Location of Lake Bangweulu on the map of Zambia and the location of chiefdoms sampled.

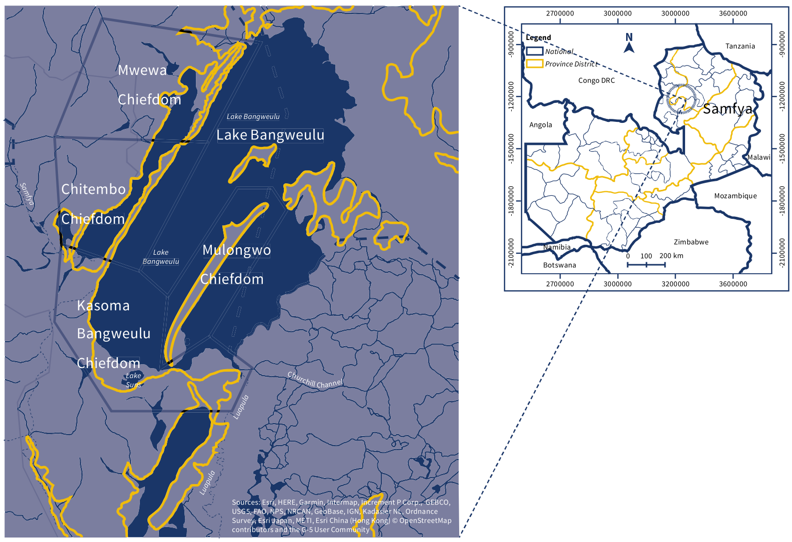

Figure 2. Map of Zambia showing the location of Lake Bangweulu (bottom right), and main map showing the location of chiefdoms that were sampled. Source: Own illustration.

3.2. Study Design

In order to understand the institutional framework and explore the appropriateness of the fisheries policy in poor communities, the researcher made a case study for the Bangweulu fishery. The research took a qualitative and quantitative approach to explore the institutional frameworks and the appropriateness of the fisheries policy for co-management. Interviews were conducted with traditional authorities, government officials from the Department of Fisheries (DoF) and local government, officials from an NGO involved in the management of capture fisheries Programme for Luapula Agricultural and Rural Development (PLARD) and household heads within the fishing communities in the study area. A purposive sampling design, which adapted stratified systematic sampling, was used to select respondents. This sampling approach was used in order to only target major players in fisheries management for every stakeholder group. According to Oliver (2014), purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling, with which decisions concerning the entities to be sampled are made by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria that may need specialist knowledge of the research issue, their capacity and willingness to participate in the research. In this case, the researcher chose the institutions to be sampled, the officials to be targeted for interviews, and traditional leaders to be interviewed, based on their knowledge and influence over the issue being studied. A stratified sampling approach was used to ensure that there is proportional distribution of the samples within the sample frame. According to Bryman (2004), stratification helps to avoid the overrepresentation of some groups being sampled. The proportional stratified sampling method helped to distribute the samples according to the number of individuals in every sub group. Groups with a larger sample such as community groups had a larger sample compared to DoF, while DoF also had a larger sample compared to PLARD. A systematic sampling design was used at community level, in order to avoid biasness by the researcher who might end up sampling more fishers at the expense of a randomly distributed community sample approach. It helped to bring about a true distribution of the community members (local stakeholders). Systematic sampling ensures that there is no overrepresentation of large or small groups in the sample, but rather distributes the groups of all sizes in a generally uniform manner as it is in the sampling frame (Bhattacherjee 2012). The secondary sources used included book reviews of journal articles, reports, books and legislative documents.

3.3. Target Population

The target population was that of traditional leaders, government officials, officials from PLARD, and heads of households within the fishing communities. Data were collected through interviews, observations and focused group discussions (FGDs) with the Village Fisheries Management Committee (VFMC) members and fishers. The collected data were then coded and analysed using SPSS version 15. The qualitative information from interviews and FDGs was arranged in themes and analyzed using NVivo 10. The research was carried out in the Samfya district of Luapula Province, a district covering the largest area of the lake fishery.

3.4. Sampling Design

The sample was divided into five (5) groups made up of; (i) institutions of government (DoF and local government), (ii) an NGO involved fisheries management in the study area PLARD, (iii) traditional authorities, (iv) members of the VFMCs and (v) individual household heads and fishers in communities around the lake fishery. The sample was divided as shown in Table 1.

The target communities were chosen according to Village Fisheries Management Committee (VFMC) zones formed by the DoF. The VFMCs were composed of

12–17 villages per VFMC. These divisions were based on the argument that some villages were too small to form a representative VFMC. Some villages were as small as two households. Ten (10) communities that were VFMCs were sampled in this research, out of 51 VFMCs on the fishery. This was because the researcher was informed that over 20 VFMC areas were hostile towards outsiders enquiring on fisheries management, due to lack of trust in the facilitators, to a point where two communities even violently chased some officials involved in the introduction of co-management. For safety reasons, the researcher only managed to sample two (2) communities where the introduction of co-management was rejected. The sampled communities were evenly spread across four chiefdoms; Kasoma Bangweulu, Chitembo, Mwewa and Mulongwe chiefdoms. VFMCs have only been formed on fishing communities around the lake. Purposive sampling was used in order to cover communities close to the lake, where most locals depend on fishing and stakeholders directly involved in local governance. Three (3) communities were sampled per chiefdom, with 10 households per VFMC area, making a total of 30 respondents per chiefdom. A total of 120 household interviews were successfully conducted.

Table 1. Summary of stakeholders sampled.

Stakeholder	Partners	Contributions	Number Sampled	Targeted Respondents
DoF	PLARD, VFMCs, Traditional Authorities, Local Government and Community Members	- Enforcement of the fish ban. - Facilitation of fisheries co-management.	3	1 provincial Fisheries officer 2 District fisheries officers
Local Government	DoF	- Make by-laws	1	1 officer responsible for area development
PLARD	DoF and VFMC	- Fund and facilitation for co-management programs	2	PLARD 1 officer in charge of fisheries at provincial level and another 1 at district level.
Traditional Authorities	DoF, VFMC and Community Members	- Arrange for community meetings	4	3 Chiefs and 1 Sub-chief
VFMC members and facilitators	PLARD, Traditional Authorities, DoF and Community members	- Work with DoF in fisheries management - Sensitize local communities on fisheries management	33	30 VFMC members through FDGs and 3 community VFMC facilitators through Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI).
Local Communities	Traditional Authorities, DoF, VFMCs and Local Government	- Adherence to rules and regulations of fisheries management - Support co-management	120	Household heads

3.5. Data Collection

Data from traditional leaders and officers from DoF, Local Government and PLARD were collected through one-on-one SSIs. Data from community members were collected through SSI, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with VFMCs and fishers; four (4) FGDs involving VFMCs members and two (2) involving migrant fishers who were excluded from the co-management arrangement, as there were no VFMCs formed on their fishing camps. One FGD was conducted in each of the four chiefdoms. These were as follows; 2 FGD with VFMC members from Mundubi Village Fisheries Management Committee (VFMC) in Chitembo village and Musumba VFMC in Kasoma Bangweulu chiefdom, and the other 2 with local fishers in Masanta area under Mwewa chiefdom and with migrant fishers in Isenga Fishing Camp on Mbabala Island in Mulongwe chiefdom. Data were collected from their localities in both cases. Field data were collected between November 2012 and February 2013 and the experiences learnt from the research are valuable in the transformation to strong partnerships for sustainable development, in line with SDG 17. The failure to form strong partnerships has continued to be a challenge in fisheries management in poor communities worldwide and the analysis of experiences would help draw a solution to this problem.

3.6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data were subject to content analysis through coding. All data collected using the various research methods were transcribed and typed up for analysis. Qualitative data collected through FGDs and SSI were entered into the QRS NVivo 10 application, which arranged them in themes to show which method was used to obtain them and clearly labelled their origin. They were then interrogated and divided according to the formation, implementation and outcome phases of partnerships. Because the interview was also structured around questions that asked about institutional frameworks, policy and challenges at each partnership phase, answers were interrogated for content. Within each partnership phase, patterns were identified between respondents and their responses, and codes were assigned to these patterns. Relevant pieces of data were then placed under these codes and assimilated to gain a full picture of partnerships. Where conflicts arose in the data, these were noted and treated as data in itself. Each conflict was considered in terms of its origin and the phase of the partnership that is being discussed when it arises. Conflicts were used to highlight issues such as breakdowns between partners or differences in opinions, and understand their role in partnership success. Frequencies and percentages of responses were tabulated and used to make conclusions. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for computation.

3.7. Data Validity and Reliability

The validity of data conveys how adequately a measure used in research captures the phenomenon under investigation (Bryman 2004). Both reliability and validity are needed to assure adequate measurement of the constructs of interest (Bhattacherjee 2012). Reliability of data reflects the consistency of results across different measurements, and this was used to test how reliable the outcomes were. Validity concerns in this study were addressed through the refining of all data collection tools to the best possible standards. Extrapolations based on rough estimates were avoided, hence preferring not to provide quantitative data in cases where the reliability of figures left much to be desired. Observed differences in results should be due to a genuine difference in the sample and not because of the unreliability of the data collection techniques or the researcher. The study used was valid and reliable, as it targeted all the stakeholders who were identified as being part of the fisheries management in the area, whether active or inactive. The use of a combination of data collection methods helped to ensure reliability.

3.8. Limitations of the Study

The researcher faced limitations in terms of finances. The Bangweulu fishery is vast, and the transport costs were high. This limited the area covered by the researcher, but the data still gave a true representation of the situation on the ground. Some household respondents were against fisheries management, and hence refused to be interviewed. Fisheries management system was a contentious issue in the Bangweulu fishery, especially on the control of the size of fishing gears. Some of the communities were hostile and did not welcome the researcher. As mentioned by Mbewe (2007b), there is a lot of resentment and suspicion from fishers towards researchers or anyone they think is associated with DoF. Therefore, the researcher had to be skillful in order to overcome these limitations.

4. Results

The household interviews composed of 84 men and 36 women, bring the total to 120 respondents. The majority of participants were fishers (69%), as shown in Figure 3.

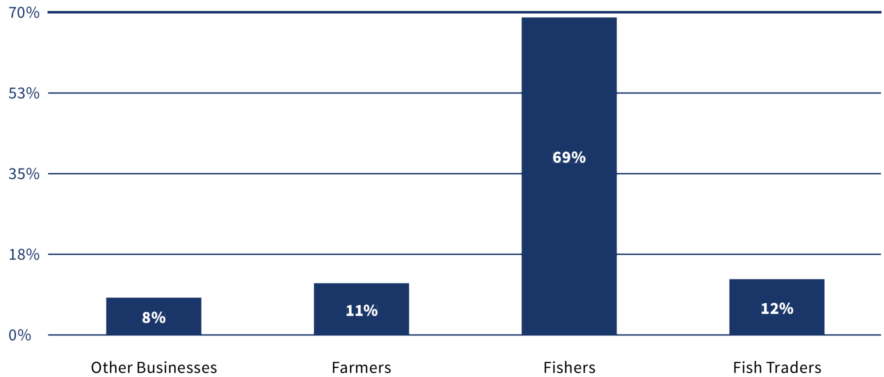

Figure 3. Distribution of sampled population through household interviews. Source: Own illustration.

Data collected revealed that some fishers practiced small scale farming during the rainy season when the fish ban is in effect, bringing the total number of farmers interviewed to 11%. Only eight percent (8%) of the respondents depended on other sources of income, such as tailoring, selling groceries and carpentry. Twelve percent (12%) of household respondents were members of the VFMCs in their area. All the participants showed profound dependence on the fishery in one way or another. Four chiefs were interviewed and 6 officials from PLARD, DoF and the local government, plus 3 VFMC community facilitators. Four FGDs conducted involved the following groups; local fishers, migrant fishers and VFMCs. The FGD with local fisher had 8 participants; the one for migrant fishers had 10 participants, while the FGD with Mundubi VFMC had 9 participants. The FGD with Musumba VFMC had 6 participants. Data collection was carried out as it was planned in the methodology.

4.1. Institutional Frameworks

Generally, there were no local community level institutions for the governance of capture fisheries operating in the Bangweulu fisheries, apart from VFMCs formed by DoF. Although DoF offices are there at district level, it had no representation at chiefdom and village community levels. According to the Provincial Fisheries Officer, there has been an effort to form and use VFMCs in the management of the fishery, and DoF had an upper hand. The co-management promoters (DoF and PLARD) planned for 81 VFMCs, but only managed to form 51 VFMCs. VFMCs were formed as a partnership link between the promoter of co-management and the local communities. Once active, VFMCs were to work with other stakeholders in sensitizing local communities on fisheries management, and participate in fish ban patrols.

4.2. Stakeholder's Engagement and Involvement

As a starting point for co-management, DoF identified the stakeholders and invited them for a stakeholder workshop in Samfya in 2010, to form the co-management partnership. The stakeholder identification and invitation process was entirely done by the DoF and other stakeholders did not participate in policy formulation for co-management. The stakeholders identified were PLARD, local government, traditional authorities and local fishing community members. The introduction of co-management at community level started with the engagement of community facilitators, who were trained for 5 days in public relations, facilitation techniques, fisheries co-management, and familiarized with the Fisheries Act of 2011. The facilitators were recruited from the local fishing communities and assigned to work in the same communities they came from. At community level, the promoters (DoF and PLARD) started with the introduction of co-management to the chiefs, then the sensitization of the headman after approval from the chiefs. The headmen then organized for community meetings in their villages. The mobilization of local communities was also done with the help of the area's political councilors. The headman introduced the community co-management facilitators during the first village meetings, where no officials from PLARD or DoF and chiefs were present. The meetings focused on the introduction of co-management facilitators. This was then followed by the first sensitization meeting by DoF and PLARD officials, and VFMCs were formed during the first or second sensitization meetings if the community accepted it. Most of the respondents felt that the formation of VFMCs was too quick as it did not allow for the locals to fully understand what was being introduced. A one- or two-days meeting was not enough. Moreover, a number of fishers missed the meetings, as it was during the fishing period when some fishers were out fishing.

Some of the chiefs were of the view that co-management was not well introduced. According to 75% of chiefs, co-management should have started with first making the laws and by-laws that support stakeholder participation, followed by the sensitization of stakeholders to help them better understand co-management. This should then be followed by a consultative meeting involving all stakeholders, starting with the leaders before the communities are even involved. The next step should have been the sensitization of local communities and the formation of VFMCs to help fisheries management once they have understood. According to some of the fishers, local communities were threatened with a prolonged fish ban period of 3–5 years. They were of the view that the promoters should have taken a friendlier approach when introducing co-management.

4.3. Institutional Collaborations, Trust and Accountability

As a way of incorporating local communities in fisheries management, VFMCs were formed in some communities. The involvement of partnership formation for fisheries co-management proved to be a challenge based on the local community's perception of the roles played by each given stakeholder in the partnership, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The major role of institutions as perceived by the household heads.

Name of Partners	Fish Ban Enforcer	Promotes Local Development	Fish Levy Collectors	No Relationship	Promotes Fisheries Management	No Idea	Oppressors of Local Communities	The Foreign Investors Who Have Bought the Lake
DoF	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PLARD	2%	2%	-	3%	69%	9%	7%	8%
Local Government	2%	95%	3%	-	-	-	-	-
Traditional Authorities	12%	73%	-	-	15%	-	-	-
VFMC	-	-	-	-	100%	-	-	-

The information presented in Table 2 shows that all the household heads perceive the DoF as only playing the role of fish ban enforcement. In the case of PLARD, the majority (69%) perceived PLARD as mainly being involved in promoting fisheries management through VFMCs and working in close partnership with DoF. In the case of local government, the majority (95%) of respondents perceived local government as the promoter of local development through the area councilor, with none of the respondents perceiving them as partners in fisheries management. Most of the respondents (73%) considered traditional authorities mainly as promotors of local development, and only a few associated them with fisheries management. All respondents perceived VFMCs' as promoters in fisheries management. The role played by each institution had an influence on the quality of relationship with local communities, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The quality of relationship between DoF, PLARD, Local Government, Traditional Authorities and VFMCs with Local Communities.

	Good	Neutral	Bad	No Idea
DoF	13%	24%	63%	-
PLARD	21%	31%	39%	9%
Local Government	91%	7%	2%	-
Traditional Authorities	87%	13%	-	-
VFMC	20%	39%	17%	14%

The majority of respondents (63%) indicated that the relationship between DoF and the local communities was bad, as DoF is just there to enforce the fish ban, and especially visible during the fish ban period when DoF is enforcing the ban. In the case of PLARD, 39% of respondents indicated that the local community's relationship with PLARD was bad, due to its association with DoF; 31% indicated that it was neutral, while the remaining 21% indicated that it was good. However, the majority (91%) perceived their relationship with local government as good, while the relationship with traditional authorities was very good. The relation with VFMCs was neutral, as they were seen as being more a part of the community compared to the others.

4.4. Appropriateness of the Fisheries Policies and Legislation

The views of DoF, PLARD, traditional authorities and local government on the appropriateness of the policy varied, as these institutions enjoy different powers, responsibilities and privileges. Appropriateness refers to what is being considered as accountable, transparent and equitable by the partners involved, as well as the wellbeing of the fishery. Their responses on whether the policies and legislation were appropriate for effective fisheries management are shown in Table 4.

As presented in Table 4, most of the respondents from DoF, PLARD and local government (83%) were of the view that the policies and legislation were appropriate for the effective management of the fishery; what was lacking was implementation. On the part of the traditional leadership, 50% of chiefs were of the view that the policies and legislation were inappropriate, as there was no role given to traditional leaders who govern these communities. They were not even involved in the policy formulation process. As for the community members, the majority were of the view that the policy and legislation was inappropriate, as it had no provision for community development, but was just meant to conserve fish.

Table 4. Views of key stakeholders on the appropriateness of the fisheries' policies and legislation.

Group Interviewed	Appropriate	Inappropriate	No knowledge of Policies and Legislation
DoF	83%	17%	-
PLARD	100%	-	-
Traditional Leaders	25%	50%	25%
Local Government	100%	-	-
Local Communities	7%	68%	25%

4.5. Fisheries Management System

The respondents from each stratum presented their views on who manages the lake, and these were categorized in order to see if co-management was taking place. The percentages on responses from respondents were then obtained. The percentages of key institution respondents for each category are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. The managers of the lake according to the various stakeholders.

	DoF	Traditional Leaders	DoF and Traditional Leaders	No One	Co-Managed by Various Stakeholders (In Partnership)
DoF, PLARD and Local Government	67%	-	-	-	33%
The Chiefs	75%	-	25%	-	-
Community Household Heads	42%	4%	51%	3%	-

The results showed that 67% of respondents from DoF, local government and PLARD indicated that the lake fishery was being managed by DoF alone. In the case of traditional leaders, the majority of chiefs (75%) indicated that the DoF manages the lake alone, and only 25% indicated that traditional authorities were involved in fisheries management. The majority of household heads (51%) were of the view that the fishery was managed by both the DoF and traditional leaders; 42% indicated that DoF is managing the fishery alone. However, findings also revealed that some traditional leaders have had an influence on the implementation of management rules, as indicated by 51% of house hold respondents.

The management rules and regulations were created by central government with no participation of the local communities. The locals expressed the view that the rules were not fair to them, as they were meant to oppress them. Their main concern was that the size of fishing gears declared legal on the fishery would reduce their catches and income levels. They further indicated that even the strict enforcement of rules would not stop them from practicing illegal fishing activities.

4.6. Communication between Stakeholders

All the respondents from DoF stated that meetings with local communities were irregular. Stakeholder meetings have not been arranged, as the institutional structures (Zone Fisheries Management Committees and the Fisheries Management Committee at district level) have not yet been formed. As a result, there were no scheduled communication arrangements between DoF and other stakeholders, except for PLARD. Communication only took place when need arose. The local government indicated that the only communication on fisheries management with DoF was through the District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC) meetings. However, a respondent from DoF indicated that they were supposed to be having periodic meetings with the traditional leaders, but that was not the case. They were only scheduled meetings between the VFMCs and the community facilitators. The household heads were asked to state the channel of communication that was used to present their views and concerns to the promoters of the fisheries co-management system. The results of their responses are shown in Figure 4.

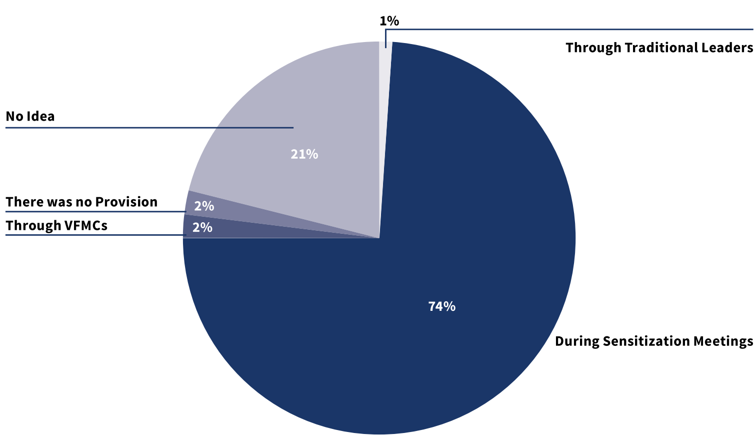

Figure 4. Channels for the presentation of community views and concerns about co-management. Source: Own illustration.

Most of the household head's respondents (74%) were of the view that the presentation of local community views and concerns was only done once, during the co-management sensitization meetings.

According to 50% of the chiefs, they captured the views and concerns of the local people through the headmen, and presented them to the government through the area councilor. The headmen collected the information through interaction with their subjects and not through community meetings. The other 50% of traditional leaders stated that they have been excluded from co-management; hence, they do not play any role in fisheries management. There was no direct connection with DoF for them to present these views and concerns.

5. Discussion

5.1. Overview of the Institutional Framework

It was found that the DoF is in charge of all fisheries management activities, and responsible for the formulation of all fisheries management policies, with very little involvement from other stakeholders. At community level, the traditional authorities were not empowered to actively participate in fisheries management. The institutional framework created by the Bangweulu fisheries co-management promoters was limited to a small number of actors. These included the DoF, PLARD and VFMCs. The migrant fishers were left out, despite the fact that the whole process was designed to control their activities. Moreover, the seasonal migration of fishers is the most common source for conflicts on fisheries and need to be controlled (Wilson 2003; Allison and Badjeck 2004). There were no VFMCs in fishing camps, where migrant fishers spend most of their time. The exclusion of key stakeholders such as traditional authorities and fishers in fisheries co-management has often resulted in the weak co-management practice that lacks transparency and legitimacy (Arthur 2005; Pomeroy 2007). As argued by Njaya (2007), this leads to general non-compliance to rules and regulations by resource users, such as by lack of adherence during the fish ban period, continuous use of illegal fishing gears and mesh, as well as fishing without licenses. Therefore, the exclusion of some stakeholders led to a weak partnership, with no support for the arrangement. Communities whose VFMCs were left out need to be included as they could play an important role in fisheries management. Their exclusion could lead to co-management failure and lack of sustainable fisheries management (Malasha 2007).

Managing fisheries resources on a cooperative basis in partnership with other stakeholders has often proved to be a preferable alternative to government managed systems (Watt 2001; Carlsson and Berkes 2005; IUCN 1996). Partnerships and stakeholder involvement in fisheries management has the benefit of contributing unbiased views and opinions concerning fisheries management issues, whereas fisheries resource users are more likely to be capable of making more equitable regulations than the government (ECA 2007). The local fishers and other resource users are intimately involved in the industry, and they are in a better position to respond to the special needs, demands and interests of individual fishers and other user groups. Therefore, there is little chance that fisheries regulations will succeed unless the fishers and other fisheries resource users actively support them (Donda and Njaya 2007). If government regulations are not supported by the fishers and other resource users, they will find ways to bypass them, and the government will incur costs in monitoring and law enforcement. The fishers and other resource users are more likely to respect the rules and regulations if they are involved when making and implementing them (Watt 2001). This calls for the inclusion of the migrant fishers in the co-management partnership.

5.2. Stakeholder Engagement and Involvement in Partnerships

The stakeholder engagement and involvement process should be transparent, in order to have a well-represented stakeholder distribution (Arthur 2005). Although DoF identified the stakeholders, the process was not transparent and seen as equitable by some stakeholders. None of the stakeholders knew how that identification and inclusion process was undertaken. As a result, some stakeholders, such as traditional authorities, fish traders and migrant fishers were left out. This negatively affected their support and lowered the chances of partnering with them. According to Haambiya et al. (2015, p. 83), "the Zambian government has underestimated the capacities of fishing communities to manage local fisheries resource systems to meet their needs". The key stakeholders such as fishers and traditional authorities should have participated in the formation of the policy that supports co-management so that their concerns are considered from the beginning. This could have led to a policy that is inclusive and fair for them. The key stakeholders should have had an input at policy formulation, planning and implementation levels. This would bring about transparency, equity and accountability, and all parties would be held accountable for the decisions made (Arthur 2005; Berkes and Doubleday 2007; Pomeroy 2007). Furthermore, consultation should be done after the sensitization of stakeholder on the whole co-management arrangement. This is because they cannot make valuable contributions over something they do not understand well.

Experience has shown that local users have no interest in the success of management initiatives when they are not involved in any aspect of the planning for a new project or initiative, and worse when they can directly or indirectly act to undermine it (Ostrom 2010; COFAD 2002). The co-management participant must feel that the rules in place are equitable, and there must be the sharing of costs and benefits in a manner that the benefits outweigh the costs (Pomeroy et al. 2001). The fishers must understand, recognize an incentive and agree to the co-management arrangements before the process begins so as to support the initiative throughout. Co-management cannot work unless the fishers and other fisheries resource users actively support it (Donda and Njaya 2007). Therefore, the failure to identify and involve some stakeholders at an early stage contributed to a weak partnership arrangement on the fisheries, as well as a lack of support from some stakeholders.

5.3. Institutional Collaborations, Trust and Accountability

Since the late 1980s, various forms of fisheries co-management initiatives have been implemented in some of the major fisheries, in many developing countries including Zambia. The initiatives have mostly been funded by international organizations such as SNV, from Netherlands and PLARD, an NGO funded by the Finnish government. These are global partnerships meant to help developing countries to develop. However, most of these initiatives have not been successful, as there has been no continuity and progress on the output and outcome of such programs and projects. Once the project and programs' funding ends, so does the progression and implementation of the co-management operations in most communities. This has been the case for co-management in the poor fishing communities of Zambia such as the Bangweulu fisheries, and can be considered as an 'aborted devolution' (Malasha 2007). For co-management to work, the sharing of authority and responsibilities should be accompanied with matching resources (Pomeroy et al. 2001). It was observed that, while institutional frameworks may be established, effective collaboration should be there in order to build capacity among stakeholders, while at the same time, develop trust and accountability between them. It is important to note that there is a difference between stakeholder involvement and partnership. A stakeholder may be involved just for approval or consultation purposes, while the partnership is an agreement to work together. The institutions involved in co-management should form partnerships where they agree on the roles of each partner in the arrangement, as well as establish the rules and regulation of their operations in accordance with the law. In this case, an institutional framework would be established where the leaving of a partner can be filled or replaced by other partners.

The involvement of VFMCs in fisheries co-management has proved to be a challenge in some fisheries, because of the type and quality of relationship between the local communities and the promoters of co-management, as was the case with Lake Bangweulu fisheries. The local communities perceive the DoF as just being fish ban enforcers, and this affected the relationship between DoF and local communities. As a result, the quality of relationship between them was generally bad, especially during the fish ban period. The fishers viewed DoF as:

> "An enemy who is just there to deny the locals access to a resource that is God given". (Statement recorded during FGDs, February 2013)

With this notion, local communities cannot trust DoF, as an enemy cannot work to improve their living standards. With such a bad relationship between them, it was not easy for the local communities to trust DoF, and that is why the actions of DoF were looked upon with suspicion. Hence, the locals viewed co-management as a move by DoF to effectively enforce the rules on the fishery and not help local communities. This is not far from the truth, as the Bangweulu co-management arrangement was mainly designed to help DoF enforce the rule, and local communities would only benefit from the increase in fish stocks, which would not happen immediately. The local communities expect to see immediate benefits if they are to actively participate in fisheries management (Berkes 2010). Therefore, the DoF should consider directing its management efforts towards establishing and improving the working relationship with the fishing community, to be able to give advice based on sound scientific investigations.

Although the traditional authorities and local government supported the introduction of co-management through the mobilization of fishing communities, they had no role apart from giving DoF permission for co-management activities, meaning that there was no partnership between DoF, traditional authorities and local government. The governance system did not hold DoF accountable for its action to the traditional authorities, local communities and other stakeholders, except PLARD as the cofounder and funders of the co-management initiative. Therefore, it is not just a matter of involving the stakeholder in co-management, but establishing strong relationships of mutual trust if sustainability is to be achieved. The facilitators should also be held accountable to all stakeholders including the weak ones, if they are to be supported. As alluded to by Wilson et al. (2010), co-management programs will be stronger and more likely to succeed if partnerships are made between stakeholders that are seen to be trustworthy, transparent in their operations, and operating cooperatively and equitably.

The study attributes the failure of these initiatives to weak partnerships resulting from the following; weak institutional frameworks, inappropriate policies, lack of collaborations, trust and accountability among stakeholders. Only a few countries have formal frameworks for enabling and ensuring effective partnerships (Beisheim 2007; Horan 2019). Otherwise, most countries rely on a voluntary, bottom-up ad hoc approach to partnership formation (Horan 2019; Martens 2007). Therefore, understanding the experiences on fisheries such a Lake Bangweulu would help in developing a strong partnership for effective co-management, which would lead to sustainable development.

5.4. Appropriateness of the Policies and Legislation

Fifty percent (50%) of the chiefs (traditional authorities) on the Bangweulu fishery indicated that the fisheries policy and legislation were inappropriate, as they have failed to define the roles that traditional authorities should play in fisheries management. The policy was silent on the role of traditional authorities and other stakeholders in a decentralized set-up. It has been argued that traditional authorities can play a major role in fisheries management (Mbewe 2007a; Wilson et al. 2003). However, the role of traditional authorities in the Bangweulu fishery was found to be ambiguous. This contributed to the ineffectiveness of the co-management arrangement on the fishery. As suggested by Malasha (2007), there is a need to clearly spell out the role that the traditional authorities are going to play in fisheries management for the fishery to be effectively governed. However, this should be done with caution, as traditional authorities can sometimes take advantage of the system for their own benefit at the expense of other stakeholders (Béné et al. 2008). For the co-management initiatives to be successful, initiators should not only establish supportive legislation, policies and structures, but should clearly spell out jurisdictions and controls that would define and clarify the rights and responsibilities of partners (Pomeroy et al. 2001). This would support local enforcement and setup accountability mechanisms that would provide local communities with the legal right to organize and make arrangements related to their needs.

Decentralization is normally perceived as one possible solution for the improvement of rural population livelihoods, and as a mean of poverty alleviation (Béné et al. 2008). Although the decentralization of fisheries governance and management was adopted in practice where the resource users would be more directly responsible for the resources in their administrative areas, the fisheries policy and Act of 2011 did not state the decentralization levels and functions of DoF at national, provincial and district levels. One of the objectives of the decentralization policy was to empower local communities by devolving decision making and functions with matching resources from the center to the lower levels, in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services (Government of the Republic of Zambia 2002). However, this part was lacking in the Fisheries Policy and Act of 2011, hence leaving a situation where fisheries governance and management were still centralized. While decentralization transfers some authority and responsibility to lower levels and subordinates, the arrangement still concentrated authority in the hands of higher authorities, and thus accountability was still left with central government (Government of the Republic of Zambia 2002).

Despite the fisheries policy being in support of participatory management, it failed to address the issue of sustainability. Funding is very critical to the success of any institution and its sustainability. However, VFMCs had no well-defined arrangements for income generation. Although DoF expressed the view that local government was not cooperative in terms of willingness to share fisheries levy with local communities, the local government was working in accordance with the Local Government Act, which had no provision for the sharing of revenues with local communities. Hence, there was no basis for sharing the local government's revenue from fish levy with VFMCs or DoF. This has been the experience in many African countries, where there has been no effective integration of the small-scale fisheries in the agenda of the local authorities, apart from the taxes levied by the local governments (Béné et al. 2008). The policies and legislation should explicitly state how the co-management institutions would raise funds for their operations, and how revenues generated by the fishery would contribute to both local development and fisheries management. There is the need to come up with legal prescriptions for benefit sharing for co-management participants. The revenues collected from fish levies and fishing licenses should be shared with local communities, so that the fishery would have a way of generating funds for its own development. The community's share of the benefit can be used for community development projects, which would, in turn, uplift the living standards of the locals and reduce their dependence on the fishing. Therefore, the fisheries policy and legislation should clearly prescribe the benefit sharing mechanism from co-management.

The failure to define the role of local government in the fisheries policy and legislation makes it difficult for DoF to govern fisheries at district level. Local government is one of the key stakeholders for enhancing governance, development and poverty alleviation at local community level (Ministry of Local Government and Housing 2009). The local government has the responsibility to mobilize and allocate public resources, in order to effectively meet local development objectives, as well as support the implementation of national programs (ibid.) It is therefore inappropriate for the fisheries policy to give authority to DoF, minus explicitly stating how power and responsibilities will be shared with other stakeholder actors in order to promote accountability among them.

The research showed that the main problem faced in the management of fisheries in poor communities is the lack of alternative livelihood and incentive to help fishing communities to adapt to the new management arrangement and develop their communities. The fisheries policy should provide for incentives that would help gain the support of local communities, while at the same time promote the performance of community structures for fisheries management, and ensure their sustainability. Hutton and Nigel (2003) introduced the term "incentive-driven conservation", as a way to motivate local communities to conserve wild living species. The Fisheries policy lacked a benefit sharing arrangement from fish levy that would give local communities some incentives. The incentive can be obtained from the fisheries levy, fishing licenses and boat registration fees.

5.5. Fisheries Management Systems

The co-management arrangement was inactive, as controls on the fisheries were only there for three (3) months, which was the official fish ban period on the recently identified fish breeding areas. After that, no permission is required for the use of the fishery, except on fish breeding areas where breeding was prohibited. This led to an open access fishery, with no permission required for users. Most of the fishers did not obtain fishing licenses and DoF could not enforce this law. The law on the acquisition of fishing license for commercial fishers has been there for a very long time, but not effective on the Bangweulu, just about 4 fishers obtained fishing licenses out of over 15,000 fishers in 2011 (Department of Fisheries 2011).

The management rules for the lake fisheries were entirely made by the DoF, and VFMCs would only help to enforce these. The rules included restrictions on the size of fishing gears and mesh, as well as fishing methods. However, the restrictions on some fishing methods and size of fishing gears and meshes were hardly followed by the fishers, who disagree with most of them (Kolding et al. 2003). Just about one fifth of the fishing gears used were technically legal (Kolding 2011). There has a lot of under-reporting or concealment of those using illegal fishing gears (Mbewe 2007a). According to Kolding (2011), the fishing methods and gears used on the Bangweulu appear not to have changed much in recorded history. Therefore, the fishers are adapted to catching a high variety of predominantly small fish, which have been declared illegal by DoF. The fishers prefer to use the small sized mesh nets, which have been declared illegal than the legal large sized nets, as the smaller varieties of fish were more commercially viable and easier to catch. As indicated by Kolding (2011), the most viable fish varieties on the Bangweulu fishery are small and caught using illegal gears. The Department of Fisheries (2011) also indicated that the smaller mesh sized nets (illegal nets) were more effective than the larger (legal) mesh sized nets on the Bangweulu fishery. However, the DoF argued that the predominant use of smaller mesh size nets on the fishery was dangerous on the fish stock, as more juvenile fish are captured before breeding (Department of Fisheries 2011). If not controlled, this can lead to overfishing. Hence, management strategies need to be found based on regulating mesh size for the fishing nets while, at the same time, benefitting all stakeholders. It is important to note that many fishermen and their families rely on fishing for their income, with no alternative, and are ready to ignore a government-mandated ban. Hence, there is a need for partnership between the government and local fishing communities, along with other agencies that can work with the communities to develop alternative livelihoods, as this would result in a holistic, implementable and viable solution (Darian et al. 2018).

Rule breakers were punished through the confiscation of fishing materials, payment of a fine or imprisonment. The use of stiff punishment on law breakers by the government when one is found guilty failed to deter fishers from engaging in illegal fishing activities. Instead of discouraging illegal fishing activities, this approach encouraged some fishers to do more illegal fishing. According to Mbewe (2007a), most fishers on the Bangweulu mainly use hired labor in their fishing activities compared to self-employment, or using family members without necessarily hiring them. Most fishers in the area hired fishing materials and equipment like boats, fishing nets and bicycles for transportation. Once a fisher is arrested and the fishing materials confiscated, the owners of the items continue counting the days and charging the fisher until these items are returned. In a case where the confiscated items are auctioned, the fisher is expected to pay the owner for the number of days that the items were not returned, plus the cost of the items. This punishment then puts the fisher in a position where he is indebted to the owner of the items confiscated, and hence needs to do more illegal fishing in order to payback the owner. According to Pomeroy et al. (2001), the rules should be simple so that those affected by them can easily understand and comply. Compliance is determined by the individual fisher's perspective of fairness and appropriateness of the law and its institutions.

A fair strategy would only be met with the participation of all the stakeholders and a focus on community development. As argued by Kolding (2011), it is very unlikely that the strong enforcement of the legislation would yield any positive results for either the fishers or the fishery. While the DoF is busy looking for ways to effectively enforce the law, the fishers strongly resist them, and claim that the rules and regulations would reduce, and not improve their catches, and that the majority of the fish targeted will not be caught using legal fishing gears. The strong enforcement of these restrictions would decrease pressure on the heavily exploited fish species on the fishery. Therefore, the fishers are not ready to support the co-management initiative, as it would enforce these rules and regulations, thereby reducing their catches (Ostrom 2010).

The fisheries policy and legislation should be revised to leave room for differentiation between the various fisheries within the country. In this way, specific regulations, adapted to the prevailing conditions in each individual fishery, can be designed. For the Bangweulu fisheries, some illegal fishing gears such as seine nets can be legalized, until further analysis is done on the effects of the small mesh sizes on the fishery, as most fish species are too small for the prescribed meshes, hence the DoF should tolerate these methods. This can only be amicably resolved through a co-management partnership involving various key stakeholders.

5.6. Communication between Stakeholders

Regular communication and dialogue between partners are critical for the successful governance of capture fisheries, as they bring about transparency in the implementation process (Pomeroy et al. 2001). Regular communication also helps to monitor and control activities, as it gives the implementers an opportunity to make informed decision. However, the Bangweulu fishery co-management partners lacked regular communication arrangements. There were no scheduled communication arrangements between institutions that have a stake in the fishery. Since DoF was the only active member involved in the management of the fishery, the lack of arrangements to communicate with other partners shows that DoF was not accountable to these the partners over its actions. According to Uhlendahl et al. (2011), the implementers of such arrangements must be accountable, efficient and responsive. This led to a situation where there was no formal channel for the presentation of views and concerns of the local people. As indicated by 74% of household heads, the local community’s views and concerns were only presented to DoF during the co-management sensitization meetings, and this was one of the rare meetings between DoF and local communities. Hence, the local communities had no say on the management of the fishery. The DoF only informed the communities on the fish ban enforcement, mainly at the beginning of the fish ban period. This was being done through posters, and the use of the Zambia Information Service AV announcers who would go around the communities announcing the same.

Although some of the chiefs captured the views and concerns of the local people through the headmen and presented them to government through the area councilors, the views may not give a full reflection of the community's views and concerns, as the community members were not aware that they should report their concerns through their traditional leaders. The local community's views and concerns were only captured informally by the headmen (traditional leaders), mainly through interactions, and not through community meetings. There was also disconnect in communication between chiefs and DoF as chiefs report to area councilors, who have no direct communication with the DoF. Local government was not actively involved in fisheries management, unless if bylaws were to be made. Hence, local government had no communication arrangements with other stakeholders in the fishery. They only communicated with other stakeholders through the District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC) meetings. However, the DDCC was ineffective because it was a composition of various ministry personnel operating at district level with diverse interest.

Effective co-management calls for continuous dialogue and understanding between stakeholders (Donda and Njaya 2007). Since the VFMCs were not having meetings with the local communities, they were not a channel of communication that could represent the local people, as they were not having the local people's views and concerns, but their own personal views and concerns. Therefore, poor communication can be a recipe for weak partners or mare stakeholder participation.

6. Conclusions

Achieving SDG 17 is an interesting task at both a national and international level, particularly as the successful implementation of this goal transforms the implementation of the entire SDGs. It is placed at the center of SDG implementation, and emphasizes building a multi-stakeholder partnership for the SDGs. There has been a mismatch between the types of partnerships required for transformation to achieve SDGs and the voluntary partnership approach in management. Therefore, achieving the implementation of SDG 17 as framed requires strong institutional frameworks with deliberate policy strategies that strengthen nationally focused partnerships as the case of co-management. It was found that a well-defined institutional framework should be set up to guide the operations of the co-management initiative, which has to be supported by the policy and legislation. Each partner should have well defined roles and responsibility owed to other partners. Partners should be able to incur costs and derive benefit from the initiative if it is to be sustainable. As is the case for local governments, they should be able to see the benefits of sharing revenue from the fish levy with the co-management group. It was observed that there should be a high level of corporation and transparency between partners, in order to develop support from other stakeholders. The fisheries policy and legislation are inappropriate for effective governance in poor communities if it lacks consideration of local community needs. The main objective of the fisheries policy in Zambia was to conserve fisheries resources and promote sustainable fishing practice. The initiative was not meant to uplift the living conditions of the fishing communities; hence the arrangement has failed to attract the support of local fishers and proved to be a weak link in the partnership. Although the local communities would benefit when fish stocks increase in the long run, they need to be helped with alternative livelihoods for them to support and effectively participate in fisheries co-management. There can be no effective co-management in poor fishing communities if alternative livelihoods are not provided. Co-management should be designed in such a way that it should be able to uplift the living standards of the local communities and benefit all the stakeholders. Both the policy and co-management arrangements lack a benefit sharing mechanism to promote local community development. Fishers would not support new restrictions on the fishery as such a move would deepen their poverty levels. There is a need to change the policy focus to a more community development centered approach as it could be more sustainable than that with a conservation focus.

The critical importance of strong partnerships cannot be emphasized enough to enable collective action with the full participation of all relevant stakeholders. It is important to note that having a greater mixture of stakeholders' representation in fisheries management committees will lead to stronger co-management partnerships. Co-management programs should involve various stakeholders that are seen to be trustworthy, transparent, operating cooperatively and equitably. This would lead to stronger partnerships that would ensure sustainability of such an initiative.

A good partnership approach for the successful implementation of co-management in poor communities should ensure the following;

- The institutional framework should promote strong partnerships with well-defined roles among partners, as this goes beyond the involvement of stakeholders.
- The partnerships should be made in such a way that all partners should be able to derive mutual benefits acceptable by each given partner.
- The policy on fisheries management should focus on uplifting the livelihood of local communities, while at the same time conserving fish.
- The promoters of co-management should involve the local fishing communities in identifying alternative livelihoods, so that the locals can support co-management. This does not necessarily mean providing incentives in the form of handouts,

but supporting different avenues like rural entrepreneurship, market linkages, agricultural development, formation of some business development association, capacity building in local development ventures and the provision of capital, using credit facilities.

These measures can be used to develop sustainable co-management partnerships that would contribute to the successful attainment of SDG 17. The strong arrangement would help erase hunger and eliminate poverty in poor fishing communities.

Author Contributions: F.M.C. conducted the research, starting from the development of the research proposal, data collection and writing. It is from this work that this chapter has been developed. The submitted chapter was written by F.M.C. J.M. supervised the research by giving guidance and advice throughout the research process. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank several people who contributed to this research process: Firstly, my supervisor Jacob Mwitwa, Stephen Syampungani the course coordinator at our School of Natural Resources and Taylor the Dean for the School of Graduate studies, for their patience, guidance, criticism and encouragement throughout the study. It was a privilege to work under their guidance and to be able to learn from their experience. I valued your comments and insights. My field work would not have been possible without the help of the Luapula Provincial Fisheries Officer, E. Mutanuka; M. Ng'onga (Senior Fisheries Research Officer-Samfya), F. Chibuye (Senior Fisheries Co-Management Community Facilitator) and S. Banda, (Fisheries Co-Management Community Facilitator), Senior Chief Mwewa, Chieftains Mulongwe, Chief Chitembo and Sub Chief Mpanta. Special thanks also go to those who participated in the interviews, focused group discussions and everyone who, in one way or another, made a positive contribution to this work. I also thank the editor, assistant editor and anonymous reviewers for their suggestions regarding the improvement of the chapter.

Conflicts of Interest: The listed authors certify that they have NO affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest (such as honoraria; educational grants; participation in speakers' bureaus; membership, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, or other equity interest; and expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements), or non-financial interest (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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Reflecting on the Role of Academia–Private Sector Partnerships in Moving Forward with the SDGs

Annmarie Ryan and Christian Hauser

1. Introduction

Partnerships are central to realizing the United Nations Agenda 2030, and thus have received their own focus within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, in SDG 17, "Partnerships to Achieve the Goals", partnerships are enshrined as an integral mechanism for the achievement of the other 16 goals. Central to the SDG agenda is the notion of strengthening global solidarity. Solidarity comes with connotations of collective action and the recognition that we can do more together than on our own. This is set against the backdrop that the challenges we face, and hence the issues that the SDGs seek to address, are wicked in nature. This implies that individual solutions are not easy to find and, where problems are codependent on one another, there is interdependency in the problem. This means we must take a broader holistic view when attempting to address the SDGs. However, despite the apparent prominence and importance of partnerships in the SDGs, it is interesting to note that in SDG 17 only two of the 19 sub-targets, targets 17.16 and 17.17, correspond to the interaction between partners. Cross sector partnerships are regarded as an important vehicle to achieve broad-scale change for sustainability (Clarke and Crane 2018), enabling parties from different sectors to come together, share skills and resources, and ultimately achieve more together than they could on their own (Gray and Wood 1991; Glasbergen 2007; Googins and Rochlin 2000). From over 40 years of research in business relationships, public–private partnerships, cross-sector partnerships, and, more recently, multi-stakeholder partnerships, it has been shown that the quality of interaction between parties is crucial in order to achieve major positive societal and/or environmental outcomes. To this end, extant literature has adopted a process perspective that considers how actors interact with one another and the impact that the mode of interaction has on the achieved outcome of the partnership (Seitanidi and Ryan 2007; Barroso-Méndez et al. 2016).

In this essay, we advocate a process perspective and describe how higher education institutions (HEIs) can engage in partnerships for sustainable development in which knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources are mobilized and shared. Central to a process perspective is the question: What does each of the involved parties have to give to the relationship, or indeed sacrifice, to make the partnership succeed? For example, Håkansson and Snehota (1998) described the inherent costs of partnerships, including a loss of control, a recognition of the indeterminate nature of long-term relationships, the degree of investments required, and the 'stickiness' of relationships, which refers to the situation in developing close relationships with key counterparts where one also becomes connected to a wider network of organizations, in both a direct and indirect way. Therefore, the focal organization becomes subject to third-party relations, which they do not control directly.

A special focus of this essay is on partnerships of HEIs of the UN-backed initiative Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) and on how the activities of schools from the PRME Champions network can inspire SDG-related partnerships of other universities and business schools. PRME is a principles-based global platform for HEIs to advance responsible management and the SDGs (Hauser 2019). Launched in 2007, the initiative aims to foster sustainability and corporate social responsibility through educating future professionals at HEIs. As of 2020, PRME had 820 signatory HEIs globally who have committed to integrating the six PRME principles throughout their organizational functions. Of the 820 PRME signatories, the PRME Champion network consists of 37 business schools globally who are actively committed and highly engaged in fostering the PRME and the SDG agenda. In the context of this essay, two key principles of the PRME are vital. Principle 5 focuses on partnerships and calls on HEIs to collaborate with key stakeholders, and share knowledge and skills in meeting stakeholders' social and environmental responsibilities. The emphasis here is to work collaboratively rather than through dogma or preaching. This brings us to Principle 6, which focuses on dialogue and, again, brings with it the notion of listening to other stakeholders to understand and empathize with their position, and bring different stakeholders together to foster collaboration and collective action.

Even where HEIs have established an SDG-related agenda, they will face challenges and issues trying to collaborate with their stakeholders on SDG-related topics. These challenges are associated with bringing together multiple stakeholders on common issues, mobilizing financial resources and securing affective commitment within the organization. After all, it is usually the organizations' agenda and their specific needs that determine the definition of the issues at stake, and with whom to collaborate, that will lead to the desired results. However, this is different with SDG-related partnerships because the issues do not have to be defined by the agendas and needs of the individual organizations, but by the SDGs (Hauser and

Ryan forthcoming). Furthermore, in the context of HEIs, not only the role of the institution but also the role of the individual faculty members needs to be considered, considering the unique aspect of academic freedom in higher education. In many countries, academic freedom is a fundamental right and part of the self-conception of universities, whether private or publicly owned. Scholars are free to decide how to use the resources available to them and which topics they wish to focus on. Furthermore, in many countries, the confines of faculty member engagement and cooperation with stakeholders other than students are unclear and controversial. In addition, partnerships with stakeholders often run up against the reward system in the academic setting, because the rewards of promotion and tenure are based essentially on peer-reviewed publications, while teaching and other activities, such as facilitating society-oriented partnerships, rarely enter the equation for rewards (cf. Schmandt and Wilson 2018).

2. Working towards the Partnership Sweet Spot

In an effort to scrutinize contemporary SDG-related partnerships between HEIs and other sectors, the authors of this chapter recently proposed a three-dimensional model (Hauser and Ryan forthcoming). The first dimension aims to address the intended outcome of the partnership, whether the partnership is driven to serve the basic organizational functions of the educational institution, or whether the intended end benefit is for the practitioners and wider society. The second dimension describes the degree of material commitment by the HEI towards the partnership. This ranges on a continuum from low to high. At the lower end of the scale, little, if any, support at the university level for the partnership would be provided. In this case, human resources may be reallocated to allow for the partnership to occur, or facilities may be made available for use for the partnership. The higher end of the scale is characterized by great material commitment at the university level. Here, funds may be provided explicitly for the partnership, or a new position specifically created. The third dimension seeks to explain the level of affective commitment by the university and is presented on a continuum from low to high, whereby both top-level management and individual faculty members at HEIs who actively seek SDG-related partnerships can be considered as having a high degree of affective commitment, and those who are more passive and dormant in obtaining SDG-related partnership are considered to have a low level.

For the purpose of this essay, we simplified dimensions two and three to consider whether HEI partnerships are primarily faculty- or management-led. We offer the following model as a method for HEIs to situate their current partnership activities and consider how they might achieve the partnership sweet spot (PSS). The PSS, developed by the authors and introduced in this essay, integrates key insights from the cross sector and inter-organizational research literature and is offered as a parsimonious framework for HEIs to situate and strategically develop their partnership portfolio. In the framework (see Figure 1), we suggest that HEI partnerships will be primarily management- or faculty-led (horizontal axis) and driven by their institutional agenda or in response to broader societal goals (vertical axis). As we will see from the exemplars below, many institutions will have examples of activities of partnership-related programs that fall into more than one category. We suggest that the sweet spot is where, rather than viewing partnerships as isolated activities driven by multiple logics, institutions attempt to work towards a more central position, exemplified in the PSS. This PSS is where faculties are engaged and are driving partnerships that align with their teaching and research interests, but are supported, enabled and equipped by management. Furthermore, we identify that, while the individual school agenda must be served, this should be done in a manner that meaningfully addresses the SDG 17 challenges of the wider society, and the school should provide a framework to measure or reflect on the impact of their partnership activities. We understand that this is an ongoing process and, therefore, the model presented should be regarded as dynamic in nature (see return arrows and broken line circles), where the sweet spot is regarded as an overarching 'direction of travel' in building sustainable, SDG-responsive academia–private sector partnerships.

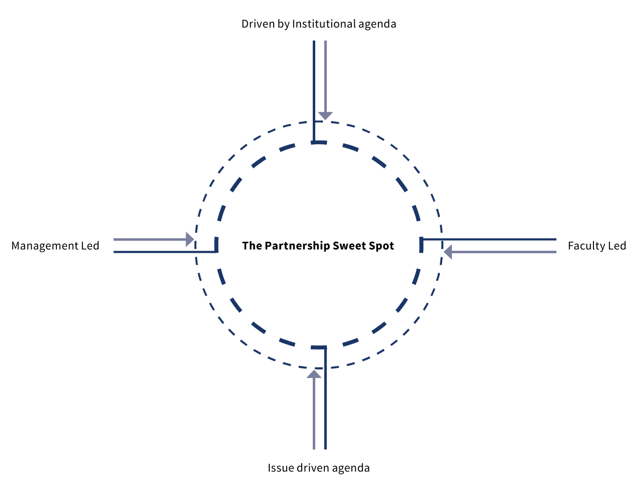

Figure 1. The academia–private sector partnership sweet spot (PPS). Source: Own illustration.

3. Examples of SDG-Related Academia–Private Sector Partnerships

To learn more about existing partnerships between academia and other sectors, the 37 business schools of the PRME Champion network were contacted in September 2019 and asked to provide some examples of their partnership activities. A total of 13 business schools responded to the request and provided written examples. The following section draws on these examples to illustrate the PSS framework.

Depending on whether the partnership is initiated by individual faculty members (right side of the horizontal axis) or by the university's management (left side of the horizontal axis), and on the level of material resources made available for the activities by the university, the following examples illustrate how PRME Champion schools acted in such circumstances to establish fruitful SDG-related partnerships. The first exemplary scenarios refer to SDG-related partnerships that are primarily oriented towards the domains of the university's main business, i.e., teaching and research (top of the vertical axis), whereas the examples that follow are oriented more toward the SDG-related needs of the wider society (bottom of the vertical axis).

3.1. Examples of Faculty-Led Partnership Activities

As an individual faculty member, there are many opportunities to develop partnerships with key stakeholders for teaching or research purposes. For example, the faculty at *Zeta* University, located in northern Europe, actively searches for partnerships for guest lecturers, for example, in their project course in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Furthermore, faculty members of *Zeta* University collaborated with colleagues of three other HEIs to create open-access online learning material on all 17 SDGs, thus addressing the teaching aspects of the core business of the university. All of the videos highlight local examples of contributions to the SDGs. They have been created under the creative commons license and, thus, can be shared freely by providing appropriate credit and can be built upon, as well, for non-commercial purposes. Furthermore, this project forms the groundwork for a massive open online course (MOOC) on the SDGs to be launched in 2020 on an e-learning platform with over 8 million active users. Another example is partnerships, which are developed to enable students to connect with the local community and offer and build their expertise. In this regard, Australian *Alpha* University collaborates with the city council and local businesses to offer internships to students alongside their studies to enhance their learning.

When considering a cooperation that has a research orientation, the faculty at *Zeta* University engage in partnerships for research projects and collaborations for individual publications, which could then be further disseminated into additional research projects, or into educating the public at stakeholder events. At *Lambda* Business School, another university located in northern Europe, many collaborative research projects are positioned around the SDGs, particularly relating to CSR in different companies, circular economy, sustainable industry networks, migration and sustainable finance. In such applied research-oriented collaborative projects, researchers mainly provide systematic approaches to develop CSR activities, reporting and indicators (e.g., environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors) or benchmarks to evaluate the effectiveness of policies or programs. Accordingly, their partners provide data for researchers to analyze within such frameworks—often in the interview format but sometimes also detailed data from operations. For example, in a PhD project on the circular economy, several big manufacturers unveil their logistics and supply chains for the student to include them in a model to evaluate the environmental versus economic impacts of different business model alternatives.

Faculty members of the *Kappa* Business School in Western Europe collaborated with colleagues of other HEIs in an effort to show how popular music can be used as a way to discuss climate change and climate action, as well as to show that young people have a voice on the subject. In this collaborative effort, a workshop was conducted with international students and staff of the university, who were each asked to write a paragraph about what climate change means to them, what the environment means to them, and what the future looks like to them. From these responses, a senior lecturer shaped them into lyrics, wrote the music, and then brought it to the university's recording studios where it was sung by a university graduate, and played by members of staff. The song was then used in higher education as both a template of how to engage students from different countries, subject areas, and universities in a proactive discussion about climate change or as a conversation starter to help elicit new ideas or projects. It is especially suited to discuss actions related to SDG 7 and SDG 13 but, as it tries to 'shake up' students into keeping our world as beautiful as it is, it can be used to prompt behavioral changes with regards to any of the SDGs.

In a further initiative, *Kappa* Business School also engaged in partnerships to develop a training program on carbon literacy. Here, they invited academics with relevant expertise or those with tools to contribute to the development and rolling out of training to contribute. The training consists of three hours of the science of climate change and business impacts. The training program is one way to move the discussions of climate change to the forefront as business school academics teach their students, conduct their research, and engage with business leaders. Parallel to this package, a train-the-trainer version is also in the process of being developed, the idea being that interested business schools could invite one of the certified trainers to do a full day of training and pass the knowledge on to the academics they want to train in their business school.

In another direction, the examples provided by PRME Champion schools also illustrated a more direct alignment of faculty-led partnerships with the SDG-related needs and requirements of their partners. For instance, faculty members of *Iota* Business School located in Western Europe created a module, which actively engages students with local non-profits and community organizations to help them deliver on the SDGs relevant to their particular missions using social media. Additionally, the faculty engage with local disadvantaged schools in the vicinity to encourage the children to consider university as an option. In a similar way, the faculty of *Mu* University engage in several societal-oriented initiatives. For instance, the university created and participates in a program that aims to reduce the proportion of youth unemployment as well as reduce the amount of young people who do not study nor receive training. Here, the faculty contribute to the development of competencies in neighboring communities to access employment and invite neighboring communities to participate. Additionally, they also engage in a faculty-run program that aims to contribute to the full and effective participation of women at decisive levels in economic life. Moreover, in order to support and facilitate the access of small businesses and other companies to financial services, the faculty at *Mu* University in Latin America collaborate with financial institutions in designing educational materials and carrying out academic programs that contribute to the financial inclusion of small businesses and farmers.

In addition to seeking and conducting SDG-related partnerships, it is also important to consider the impact of these faculty driven engagements. For example, to evaluate the success and synergistic benefits of guest lecturer partnerships, *Zeta* University conducts a feedback survey with the organizations involved as well as the students.

Faculty-led partnerships are a vital component of any HEI partnership agenda in the sense that individual or groups of faculty can mobilize engagement with stakeholders, community organizations and local businesses, and are well placed to design and develop initiatives related to sustainable development. However, without broader institutional support, these initiatives might remain isolated and singular, and lose impact over time. Thus, even if different institutions have varying levels of resources available to support partnerships, it is, nevertheless, vital that senior management supports such initiatives and initiates SDG-related partnerships.

3.2. *Examples of Management-Led Partnership Activities*

Business schools have a key role to play in enabling partnership formation amongst stakeholders and providing leadership in their local communities on specific issues. The examples provided by the PRME Champion schools highlight that driving forces of partnerships differ case by case. In this regard, management-led partnerships can be driven primarily in line with the priorities and agenda of the HEI. For example, management can play a key role in enabling partnerships by explicitly investing and offering resources to facilitate the initiation of research-oriented partnerships with institutions of the private and public sectors. For example, the faculty at *Beta* University in Western Europe can apply to the university's research council for an initial financing grant. These funds are intended to help attract and build up partnerships and research consortia. Whilst the grant does not have an exclusive SDG focus, sustainable development is one of the three strategic areas of the university. Therefore, many of the applications and subsequent partnerships relate to topics from this area. After the faculty have been sponsored with the initial capital, the subsequent partnerships and research projects must be self-sustained and externally funded.

Alpha University partnered with another HEI to form an SME Research Centre. This center conducts multidisciplinary research on small and medium-size private businesses and not-for-profit enterprises, bringing together practitioner insights with world-class analysis, to enable policy development. The work of the research center provides a model of applied research leading the world in delivering critical reform to the SME sector backed up with tangible policy announcements.

A further example of the leadership that management can show is to listen to their faculty and stakeholders in devising their sustainability or partnership strategies. For example, through partnerships, *Theta* Business School in Latin America used their stakeholders' perception of the SDGs as a guideline for their sustainability strategy, which in turn helped them define future partnerships and collaborations. To do so, the business school invited internal, as well as external, stakeholders, such as suppliers, to a focus group to discuss the university's positive and negative impacts, the ways in which they could improve their institution and concrete goals for the future. Additionally, *Theta* Business School used an online questionnaire to reach out to thousands of students and alumni as well as professors and employees of their different campuses. The questions focused on the stakeholders' perception of the SDG and the SDG's individual importance to the business school, while providing leeway for feedback and suggestions. The results were analyzed and put into the materiality matrix the business school uses as a guideline for its sustainability strategy.

Systemic-level change becomes possible when the HEI moves beyond its institutional boundaries to enable the formation of SDG-related networks. For example, *Zeta* University organizes an annual stakeholder conference where they try to initiate matchmaking with different partners for potential collaborations in research and education on themes related to sustainability, CSR and the SDGs. *Kappa* Business School collaborates with a voluntary initiative that works closely with organizations across the region to run networking events and interactive workshops focusing on issues surrounding employee engagement. The group consists of members interested in employee engagement from a variety of organizations. Improving employee engagement and productivity is challenging for all organizations, especially SMEs who often lack the time and resources to implement engagement initiatives. By connecting organizations through the regional group, members can share problems and support each other in developing solutions. The business school noted that feedback from the events has been extremely positive, with members stating that they appreciated the opportunity to share thoughts and take ideas back to their organizations to implement.

Nu University in Asia had the opportunity to focus on the SDGs when redesigning its campus. Collaborating with the government and other industry players was a key strategic goal for the university, which used these partnerships to help lead the way towards a sustainable future. As a result of the university's top-down commitment to having a strong partnership with the local chamber of commerce, a sustainable campus was built with a gold certification of a green building certification system. It became a benchmark as a green campus since the entire campus operates at higher standards of energy conservation at all levels, while generating solar energy aiming to be self-sufficient. With the green building of *Nu* University, various benefits were targeted, including significant financial savings, better occupant satisfaction, reduced levels of pollution and global publicity.

The management of the North American *Epsilon* Business School states that it values authentic and meaningful partnerships and recognizes the importance of collaboration and community outreach. In its endeavors, the business school provided financial support to create a center for business and student enterprise that offers experiential learning opportunities, community engagement initiatives and incubation for student and alumni start-ups. The center specializes in problem solving for industry and innovative processes designed to bring new ideas to life. The center's incubator program provides space, mentorship, and funding for entrepreneurs to bring their new venture ideas to life. The start-ups are evaluated by whether they provide a social benefit along with a sound business model to highlight that a successful business focuses on both profitability and social impact.

An example of a partnership in this scenario, at the Western European *Delta* University, is the multi-stakeholder *Delta* Club. The club is a widening participation and community engagement initiative, working across the university's local communities. In order to tackle below average progression rates into higher education, the *Delta* Club challenges perceived barriers to progression, providing positive and rewarding experiences within a higher education setting. This partnership has won multiple awards for its innovative approach to working with local communities.

Senior management support for SDG-related partnerships is vital in bringing about higher-level change and impact on the local, regional, or national level. However, without the contribution of passionate and expert faculties, there is reason to fear that senior-management-driven partnership agendas may prove to be futile and unsustainable. The key lesson from the above examples is the value of having institutions listen to their faculty when developing their partnership strategies, and of using faculties' expertise, their social capital and their network of relations as an important input in the HEI's future partnerships.

4. Conclusions

Partnerships are central to realizing the SDGs. Thus, HEIs globally are trying to find ways to build partnerships that address the SDGs. In an effort to inspire other HEIs to collaborate with their stakeholders, we asked members of the PRME Champion group about their SDG-related partnerships. The examples from PRME Champion HEIs show that, on the one hand, some SDG-related partnerships are led by faculty initiatives, whereas, on the other hand, other partnerships are led by the management of the HEI. This can also have a level of impact on the resource commitment provided by the HEI for initiating, establishing and sustaining partnerships. Moreover, looking at the examples, it can be observed that the HEIs also tend to want to achieve different aims with their SDG-related partnerships. In this regard, some partnerships are primarily oriented towards the different domains of the university's main business, i.e., teaching and research. Conversely, other partnerships focus more directly on the SDG-related needs of the wider society.

While we agree that partnerships should serve both society and the organization, we would like to acknowledge that this is not always the case. This has been addressed in the literature on cross-sector partnering in discussions on partnerships and their societal impact, where Van Tulder et al. (2016, p. 18) argue that "research on the impact of partnerships i.e., looking whether partnerships make a difference to society (‘so what’ questions) is mainly grounded on anecdotal evidence employing prescriptive and ‘best-practice’ reasoning”. In this essay, we do not present individual school exemplars as falling into one of the quadrants of the partnership sweet spot model presented. Rather than prescribing individual examples as ‘best practice’, we suggest that HEIs use the model as a guideline to locate the positioning of their current or desired partnership activities. By gaining a greater understanding of the status quo of the partnerships, we suggest that HEIs can use this information to work towards the partnership sweet spot located at the center of the framework. In this situation, ideally, the faculty would be engaged and driving partnerships that align with their teaching and research interests and serve the SDG-related needs of the wider community, but are supported, enabled and equipped by management to do so. The model can further offer inspiration on the future direction of travel for HEIs in developing and pushing their partnership agenda. Thus, depending on the point of departure, the individual examples can serve the reader as inspiration for their future partnerships.

Author Contributions: Both authors contributed equally to this manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Acknowledgments: We would like to gratefully acknowledge the research assistance provided by Eleanor Jehan.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Achieving the Global 2030 Agenda: What Role for Voluntary Sustainability Standards?

Axel Marx and Charline Depoorter

1. Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a plan of action for "people, planet and prosperity". The 17 goals cover all crucial policy areas to secure a sustainable future, including education, health, economic development, social protection, environmental protection, and natural resources governance. The 17 goals are operationalised in 169 targets which need to be reached by 2030 or earlier. The SDGs build on the Millennium Development Goals. A crucial difference between the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals is that the former were mainly targeted to governments, while the latter target many different stakeholders, including the private sector and voluntary sustainability standards. Indeed, a shift in approach between the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals is the recognition that policy objectives are best achieved by involving and integrating different stakeholders in the policy process. This is explicitly recognised in SDG 17, which aims to foster partnerships for these goals (see Georg von Schnurbein's introduction to this volume). As a result, the 2030 Agenda carves out an important role for private actors in governing for sustainable development.

Among private (understood as "non-state") actors, Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) can play an especially important role for the SDGs and for SDG 17 in particular, as they can both serve as implementation means and help revitalise the partnerships for these goals. First, VSS can act as enforcement mechanisms for these goals, since they share similar objectives with the SDGs (WWF 2017). Although the language of the SDGs distinguishes between "goals", "targets", and "indicators", the generic term "objectives" is used in this chapter to refer to the fact that complying with specific standards of a VSS can contribute to achieving specific targets of an SDG. Second, VSS contribute to foster partnerships, since they operate globally and connect the Global South to the Global North through values chains (Ponte 2019). In a world characterised by an exponential growth in international trade and, more importantly, a change in the nature of trade, VSS can potentially play a crucial role to contribute to sustainable development. Products we buy and consume on a daily basis rely on the functioning of global value chains, meaning that the production process of most goods takes place in more than one country. Changes in information technology "have permitted firms to geographically splinter their 'production lines', designing international supply chains that allocate different parts of the production process to firms in different countries" (Hoekman 2014; see also Hamilton et al. 2012; Cattaneo et al. 2010). The importance of trade is also recognised under SDG 17 and is singled out as an important implementation mechanism to achieve sustainable development.

The objective of this chapter is to present how VSS can potentially make a contribution to achieving the SDGs if they overcome some main challenges. We first introduce VSS, briefly describe how they operate, and provide leading examples of VSS. Next, we discuss how they are linked to the SDGs. In a third section, some of the main developments in the landscape of VSS are identified. The fourth part discusses the challenges which VSS are confronted with. We end with a short conclusion.

2. What Are VSS and How Do They Operate?

The United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS) defines VSS as "standards specifying requirements that producers, traders, manufacturers, retailers or service providers may be asked to meet, relating to a wide range of sustainability metrics, including respect for basic human rights, worker health and safety, the environmental impacts of production, community relations, land use planning and others" (UNFSS 2013, p. 3). In this chapter, the term "VSS" refers to the organisations that set, enforce, and monitor such standards. While they often emanate from a joint initiative between the private sector and civil society organisations, VSS are considered as private (i.e., non-state) governance actors.

All VSS initiatives differ in how they set and enforce rules, although there are some commonalities. In a stylised way, one could say that they aim to achieve sustainable development in three distinct steps. First, they develop standards, often embedding them in existing national and international laws by, for example, including international legal commitments in their foundational principles. In this way, they integrate public rules and standards in a private set of procedures. These standards try to cover all dimensions of sustainability. Second, they translate these principles and standards into measurable indicators and actions. VSS operationalise international norms and principles in specific standards and benchmarks, which makes compliance assessment possible. Often, VSS initiatives start with defining general principles as noted earlier, and delegate the formulation of specific standards to working groups or committees which can take local conditions into account. These general principles are, hence, translated into specific "compliance benchmarks". These benchmarks contain more specific criteria which are related to each of the broad principles. Each of these benchmarks is, in turn, further defined and operationalised into measurable indicators. Third, they develop a comprehensive institutional framework to monitor compliance with these standards. After operationalising international norms into specific standards, VSS put systems in place to monitor compliance with standards by VSS adopters. Monitoring allows for the assessment of compliance with specific standards. Monitoring in VSS is a function of two interrelated components, namely audit-based systems and complaint systems (Marx and Wouters 2015). The former refer to the assessment of conformity, with standards and rules by independent third parties through a set of standardised procedures, primarily based on audit procedures. The latter, complaint systems, allow different stakeholders to constantly monitor compliance with commitments and, in cases of non-compliance, file a complaint. These systems empower external stakeholders by allowing them to raise issues relevant for the functioning of VSS.

Although the idea of voluntary standards is quite old (Marx and Wouters 2015), their proliferation is of a more recent nature. Two databases map out all existing VSS: the International Trade Centre (ITC) Standards Map currently counts over 260 VSS (ITC 2020) and the Ecolabel Index more than 460 (Ecolabel Index 2020). To recognise them better, we give several leading examples of VSS so as to cover different commodities and economic sectors.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a global, not-for-profit organisation that sets standards to make forest management environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable in the long term. It was founded in 1993 by several environmental NGOs such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the National Wildlife Federation and Friends of the Earth, along with profit-making firms such as Home Depot, B&Q, and IKEA. The emergence of the FSC is a result of strong public demands for forestry industry regulation in the 1980s, and of a perceived governance gap in the matter (Klooster 2010; Cashore et al. 2007; Bloomfield 2012). The FSC, as a third-party certification scheme, is considered by several scholars as the most advanced example of VSS due to its scope and structure (Gulbrandsen 2004; Bell and Hindmoor 2012; Schepers 2010). Indeed, about 200 million hectares of forests are FSC-certified in a total of 90 countries, mostly in Europe and North America (Forest Stewardship Council 2019a). Besides, the FSC is a truly multi-stakeholder VSS, not only as it was created by environmental NGOs and profit-making firms together, but also since its membership includes individuals such as academics, students, and activists, as well as organisations such as NGOs and profit-making firms. Its General Assembly is composed of independent members and delegates of member organisations that represent environmental, social, and economic interests. Decision-making power between these interests, as well as between Northern and Southern countries' interests, is equally distributed (Forest Stewardship Council 2019b; Pattberg 2005; Marx and Cuypers 2010; Marx et al. 2012; Moog et al. 2015).

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) was created in 1997 by the WWF and Unilever, a profit-making firm and the largest seafood buyer in the mid-1990s. It emerged as a response to the collapse of Grand Banks cod fishery off Newfoundland in the early 1990s and to the inability of governments to efficiently tackle overfishing practices and protect working conditions in the fishery industry (Marine Stewardship Counci 2019a; Gulbrandsen 2009). The MSC, therefore, sets standards on fishery practices in order to protect oceans and safeguard seafood supplies. It has certified 15 percent of global marine catch and aims to reach 30 percent by 2030. Altogether, 361 fisheries are MSC-certified in a total of 41 countries, mostly in North American and European waters, which makes the MSC the largest VSS in the fishery industry (Marine Stewardship Council 2019b). The MSC is a multi-stakeholder organisation, as its council includes representatives from the seafood industry, the environmental NGO community, the market sector, and scientists and academia. These members are divided into two categories, representing public interests on the one hand and commercial and socioeconomic interests on the other hand (Foley 2013; Ponte 2012; Gulbrandsen 2009).

The Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) is an independent organisation that works with garment brands, workers, and industry influencers in order to improve labour conditions in the garment industry. It was established in 1999 when a Dutch trade union, the Netherlands Trade Union Confederation (FNV), and the Clean Clothes Campaign, an advocacy group for garment workers, joined together to improve labour conditions in the garment industry. The FWF developed a Code of Labour Practices made up of eight labour standards derived from International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions and the UN Declaration on Human Rights. Member organisations commit to this code's principles and are required to take action to fully implement them and to monitor their progress (Marx and Wouters 2016, 2017). The FWF currently counts 187 member brands across 11 countries, mostly in Asia (Fair Wear Foundation 2019). Besides, the organisation is governed by a bipartite board composed of business associations and trade unions and NGOs, which share equal power. The FWF also encourages consultation of and collaboration between brands, trade unions, NGOs, governments, and international organisations.

The Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) was founded in 2009 following a WWF-led round table initiative, and was supported by major organisations such as Adidas, Gap Inc., H&M, ICCO, IFAP, IFC, IKEA, Organic Exchange, Oxfam, and PAN UK. The BCI aims to make cotton a sustainable mainstream commodity by reducing the environmental impacts of cotton production and by improving the livelihoods and economic development of cotton producing areas (Zulfiqar and Thapa 2018). The BCI is the largest cotton sustainability programme in the world, with more than two million licensed BCI farmers in 21 countries, mostly in Asia, Brazil, and Africa. This makes up 19 percent of the global cotton production (Better Cotton Initiative 2019a). In order to be licensed, farmers need to comply with defined minimum standards on pesticide use, water management, decent work, record keeping, training, and other factors, but they are nonetheless encouraged to further improve their practices. To attain its missions, the BCI works with a wide range of stakeholders across the cotton supply chain. Besides, its council includes member organisations ranging from civil society organisations, producers, and retailers, to brands, suppliers and manufacturers as well as independent members (Better Cotton Initiative 2019b).

The Rainforest Alliance was founded in 1987 as a non-governmental organisation that promotes responsible business. It provides certifications for sustainable forestry and agriculture, more particularly in the coffee, cocoa, tea, hazelnut, and banana sectors, but also for sustainable tourism. In 1989, the Rainforest Alliance became the first certification scheme to target forestry practices. It merged with UTZ in 2018 as both VSS were carrying similar work to address deforestation, climate change, systemic poverty, and social inequality. The organisation is active in more than 60 countries and counts over 2 million certified farmers, particularly in South America, Africa, Asia, and the US (Rainforest Alliance 2019). The Rainforest Alliance operates against standards that have been developed by the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), which revolve around ten principles: social and environmental management system; ecosystem conservation; wildlife protection; water conservation; fair treatment and good working conditions for workers; occupational health and safety; community relations; integrated crop management; soil management and conservation; integrated waste management (Ochieng et al. 2013). The Rainforest Alliance General Assembly has a tripartite structure balancing economic, social, and environmental interests in dedicated chambers with equal voting power (Rainforest Alliance 2017). It also promotes collaboration with producers, workers organisations, traders, retailers, governments, NGOs, civil society organisations, academia, and research institutions.

3. To Which SDGs Do VSS Contribute?

VSS can serve as implementation means for these goals, since they share similar objectives. This makes VSS relevant not only to SDG 17, but to the other SDGs as well. This section describes the contribution that VSS make to the SDGs, which is summarized in Figure 1.

Intuitively, one understands that VSS can directly contribute to the achievement of SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production. VSS, by essence, aim to entrench more sustainable and transparent practices among actors at all levels of global value chains, which contributes to making global production more sustainable (WWF 2017; DIE 2015). In addition, VSS contribute to achieving sustainable consumption, as they provide end-consumers with information on the sustainability of production processes and value chains through labels, which can raise awareness and shift consumption towards sustainable products. Yet, VSS can contribute to other SDGs as well.

A broad study conducted by the UNFSS compares the requirements of 122 VSS with 10 preselected SDGs, their targets, and their indicators. Results show that there are strong complementarities between VSS requirements and SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, in particular, with 102 VSS requirements being relevant to SDG 8. Among these 102 relevant requirements, the ones with the highest coverage among the 122 VSS under study all relate to decent work (UNFSS 2018). Half of those are directly linked to ILO standards, confirming that VSS have complementarities not only with SDG 8, and more particularly, with target 8 on labour rights and safe working conditions, but also with the international labour rights regime more broadly (Marx et al. 2017). Second, the study finds that 78 VSS requirements match with SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production, and more particularly, with targets 4, 5, and 6 on issues of waste management, use of chemicals, training of staff on sustainability issues, and development of environmental and social management systems. Third, 60 VSS requirements are found relevant to SDG 15 on life on land, mostly in relation to targets 2, 3, 5, and 7 on biodiversity, on quality, contamination and erosion of soils, on sustainable use and management of forests and nature resources or ecosystems, and on protection of wildlife (UNFSS 2018).

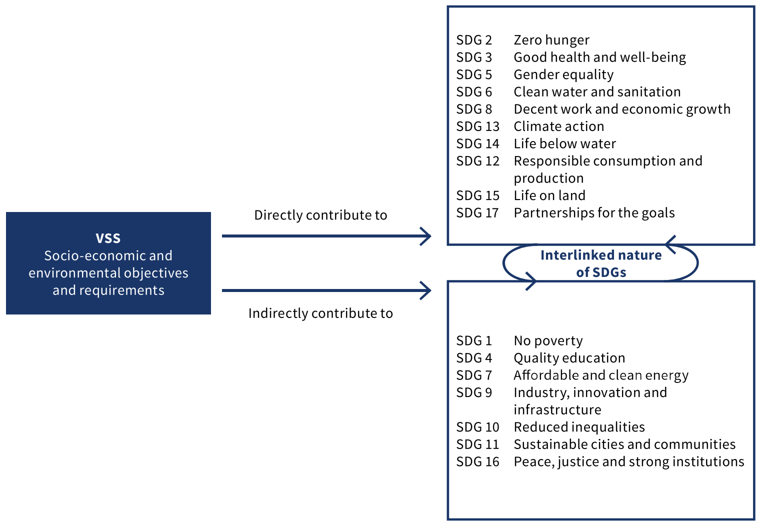

Figure 1. Contribution of Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) to the Sustainable Development Goals. Source: Own illustration.

Although the UNFSS study shows that VSS have the most complementarities with SDGs 8, 12, and 15, they also share similar requirements with other SDGs. For example, VSS can contribute to SDG 2 on zero hunger, food security, and sustainable agriculture as they aim to improve agricultural productivity, increase farmers' incomes, and ensure access to natural resources. VSS also participate in achieving SDG 3 on good health and wellbeing, as some VSS requirements are targeted at improving health and safety at work, as well as ensuring water and air quality. SDG 5 on gender equality is also tackled in many VSS schemes, as they promote equal income and opportunities and seek to prevent violence and harassment. Moreover, VSS can contribute to SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, as they aim to improve water use in production, prevent water pollution, and protect freshwater ecosystems. VSS schemes also include requirements linked to SDG 13 on climate action, more particularly, on measuring and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, on increasing carbon sequestration, and on improving energy efficiency and promoting renewable energy use. Besides, VSS contribute to the achievement of SDG 14 on life below water, as some include requirements on maintaining and rebuilding fish stocks and on protecting marine and coastal ecosystems. Lastly, VSS can also help achieve SDG 17 on partnerships for these goals, since they promote multi-stakeholder participation, transparency, knowledge exchange, public–private partnerships, and sustainable investments (WWF 2017). VSS taken as a whole, therefore, directly contribute to many SDGs. Yet, if taken individually, some VSS can contribute more to the achievement of some SDGs than others. For example, the MSC will evidently contribute more to SDG 14 on life below water than to SDG 15 on life on land, which the FSC addresses better.

Moreover, VSS can be, in some cases, indicators of progress in some SDGs. This is the case for SDG 15 on life on land, target 2 on sustainable management of forests. This target is monitored by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which uses, among other indicators, the amount of certified forests to measure progress in SDG 15.2 (FAO 2019). This synergy involves that increased uptake of and compliance with VSS goes hand in hand with progress in some SDG indicators.

Lastly, VSS can less directly but still positively participate in the achievement of other SDGs such as SDG 1 on no poverty, SDG 4 on quality education, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure, SDG 10 on reduced inequalities, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions. This is mainly due to the interlinked nature of the SDGs, meaning that progress in one SDG can impact the achievement of other SDGs. For example, the FWF aims at improving working conditions in garment factories. Upon completion of its missions, workers would be better paid and treated. This, in turn, could improve their financial ability to send their children to school, for example, thus contributing to the achievement of SDG 4 on quality education. Therefore, VSS can both directly and indirectly contribute to achieving the SDGs.

4. Developments

A first major development in VSS is their proliferation. The ITC Standards Map and the Ecolabel Index are two datasets which allow researchers to track the evolution of VSS over time. As aforementioned, the ITC Standards Map counts approximately 260 VSS, and the Ecolabel Index, which is more comprehensive in scope, currently counts 463 VSS. Figure 2 shows the evolution of the number of VSS from 1940 to 2019 based on the Ecolabel Index Database. The figure shows a strong increase in the number of initiatives between 2000 and 2010, then, a slowdown in growth, and finally, stagnation in the last 3–4 years.

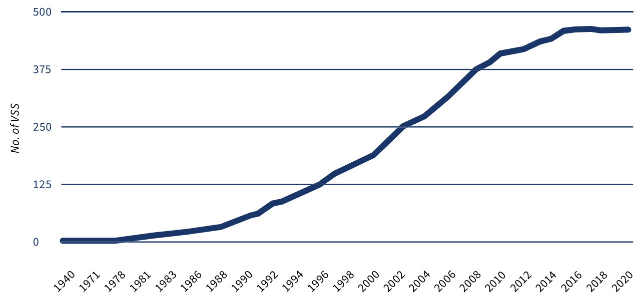

Figure 2. Evolution in the number of existing VSS (1940-2020). Source: Ecolabel Index Database—own calculation.

A second major development is that many of these VSS are integrated in more traditional public policies, such as public procurement or trade policies. This complementarity between public and private governance instruments is being increasingly recognised in the academic literature. In a recent paper, Lambin and Thorlakson (2018) show how new partnerships between governments, private companies, and VSS are reshaping global environmental governance. They focus specifically on the role of VSS in these new public–private partnerships. They argue that contrary to widely held views, interactions between governments, NGOs, and private companies surrounding the adoption of sustainable practices are not generally antagonistic, and public and private environmental governance regimes rarely operate independently, but rather reinforce each other (see also Lambin et al. 2014). Eberlein et al. (2014) also demonstrate the importance of interactions in transnational business governance. As they show, the number of schemes applying private authority to govern business conduct across borders has vastly expanded in numerous issue areas. Eberlein et al. (2014) argue that as these initiatives proliferate, they increasingly interact with one another and with state-based regimes.

This interaction can happen in at least three ways. First, an increasing number of bilateral trade agreements refer to the relevance of private initiatives. This is an approach taken by the European Union in its trade policy. All recent bilateral trade agreements signed by the European Union contain a commitment between the parties to work together in the area of voluntary standards and eco-labels. For example, the first of the "new generation" of trade agreements—that of the European Union with South Korea applied since 2011—mentioned that parties will cooperate in the area of fair and ethical trade, private and public certification, and labelling schemes, including eco-labelling. All subsequent FTAs of the EU contain similar language. Second, VSS and other private initiatives are increasingly integrated in public policy. For example, the European Union's Directive on Renewable Energy requires biofuels to be certified by a recognised certification scheme in order to be considered a sustainable biofuel and count for the targets on renewable energy (Schleifer 2013). The recent revision of the Act on the Sustainable Use of Timber in South Korea explicitly recognises some VSS as proof of verification that timber and timber products are legal. The revision of this Act, which has been implemented since 1 October 2018, made South Korea one of the first East Asian countries to issue mandatory legislation that regulates the legality of imported and domestically produced timber and timber products. According to the revised Act, unverified timber cannot be sold in South Korea and has to be returned to the country of origin or destroyed. Third, governments worldwide are using their purchasing power to pursue sustainable development through sustainable public procurement. In sustainable public procurement, VSS are increasingly used as a shortcut to facilitate sustainable buying (Marx 2019; D'Hollander and Marx 2014).

5. Challenges

VSS are also confronted with significant challenges, which will determine the degree to which they can contribute to achieving the SDGs.

A first challenge has to do with credibility. VSS have been confronted with claims that they are not credible. Marx (2013) shows, on the basis of an analysis of 426 VSS, that many VSS differ in how they are designed and that quite a number of them lack any credible enforcement architecture. This is confirmed by an analysis on a smaller sample by Fiorini et al. (2016). Both studies suggest that several VSS are pure "greenwashing" instruments rather than mechanisms to achieve sustainability. However, many VSS also include stringent standards and elaborated enforcement procedures, which are detailed by many case studies on VSS. Even for these credible VSS, concerns have been raised on how legitimate they are and which interests they do represent. Although there is evidence that some VSS are more dominated by industry, several of these claims also have been countered in the literature, with some authors arguing that the way VSS operate is sometimes remarkably democratic and representative (Dingwerth 2007).

A second challenge has to do with increasing the effectiveness of these initiatives. This has two dimensions. First, VSS need to create sufficient impact on the ground to be a genuine governance tool. There are quite a few studies analysing the impact of VSS and the degree to which they contribute to sustainable development along different socioeconomic and environmental metrics[1]. Yet, these studies show mixed results. Some show positive impact, whereas others show little or sometimes even negative impact (Oya et al. 2018; Mitiku et al. 2017; Loconto and Dankers 2014). Results are often very context specific. However, one result, which is quite consistent, is that it is difficult for VSS to perform equally well on all dimensions of sustainability, probably because it is also too much to expect standards to deliver on all dimensions of sustainability, even if that is the stated goal. Standards typically have a strong impact on some sustainable development indicators but less on others (Brandi 2017). For example, in relation to labour rights protection, VSS can have a positive impact on some labour rights, such as working hours, wage, and safety requirements, but less on others, such as freedom of association. A second dimension related to effectiveness focuses on the degree to which standards are adopted. Some scholars focus on adoption by companies and other organisations, while other scholars look at adoption at the country level. Concerning the latter, one can observe that in some countries, only a few VSS or public–private initiatives are active, while in others, many more are active. Westerwinter (2020) finds this for Transnational Governance Initiatives (TGIs), and the UNFSS (2020) find this for VSS. In relation to specific VSS, Marx and Cuypers (2010) and Marx and Wouters (2016) find a "stuck to the bottom" problem for some least developed countries which are not involved in any way in VSS dynamics. This creates a challenge of exclusion and limited adoption of these transnational governance initiatives. In order to have a significant impact, the use of many of these governance systems should be scaled up.

A third main challenge which emerges has to do with coordination and cooperation between the many existing initiatives. Due to the proliferation of initiatives, the policy or governance space is currently very crowded and there is only a limited degree of cooperation between different initiatives. In relation to private and public private initiatives, the lack of cooperation is very outspoken and creates different types of problems. Marx and Wouters (2015) aimed to capture the degree of cooperation between VSS by looking at the use of mutual recognition as a mechanism to coordinate between different initiatives. They found that mutual recognition between VSS is very low. This creates two types of problems. For consumers wanting to use these VSS as a means to buy sustainably, it creates confusion. For producers who need to comply with VSS requirements, it creates additional costs,

[1] Many of the leading impact studies are brought together on Evidensia, an online library aiming to provide credible research on the sustainability impacts and effectiveness of supply chain initiatives such as VSS. See https://www.evidensia.eco/ (accessed on 29 July 2020).

since they sometimes need to comply with multiple VSS. The lack of cooperation between systems is due to several factors such as different strategies and objectives, different procedures to assess conformity with VSS, or plain competition.

6. Conclusions

This chapter presented how VSS can contribute to achieving the SDGs. VSS have emerged and developed into a significant governance instrument which operates globally. They feed into SDG 17 by acting as implementation means for the 2030 Agenda, as compliance with their sustainability standards can contribute to achieving many SDGs' targets. Besides, VSS exemplify the multi-stakeholder approach and partnerships that SDG 17 aims to foster, as they link the Global South and the Global North through global value chains. VSS are, therefore, natural allies to pursue the SDGs.

However, VSS face significant challenges in terms of credibility, effectiveness, and cooperation. In particular, the potential for VSS to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs depends on their level of adoption, as well as on their sustainability impact on the ground (WWF 2017). Indeed, the more actors adopt VSS, the more the practices of these actors will shift to more sustainable ones and the more progress will be made towards the achievement of the SDGs. In addition, some VSS have more stringent requirements than others, and even within a single VSS scheme, some requirements might be more rigorous than others. More stringent VSS might create bigger impacts on the ground, and hence, contribute more significantly towards sustainability, but their stringency might also drive their adoption levels down. As a consequence, the level of adoption and the level of rigour of VSS requirements determine the scale of the impact of VSS on the achievement of the SDGs.

Author Contributions: Introduction, A.M.; Section describing VSS, A.M. and C.D.; Section link VSS—SDGs, C.D.; Sections Development and Challenges, A.M.; Conclusion, A.M. and C.D.

Funding: This research was funded by Flemish Fund for Scientific Research (FWO) International Coordination Action and European Commission H2020 project GLOBE, grant number 822654.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Working Together: A Logical Thing?

Alice Hengevoss and Nicholas Arnold

1. Introduction

> *This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity […] all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan.* (UN General Assembly 2015, p. 1)

The preamble to the resolution "Transforming our World: The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development", adopted on 25 September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly, clearly shows that the United Nations views partnerships between different sectors as essential for achieving sustainable economic, social and environmental development (UN General Assembly 2015). The importance the United Nations ascribes to multi-stakeholder partnerships is affirmed by Goals 17.16 and 17.17 of the Agenda 2030 (UN General Assembly 2015, p. 27).

Both before and after the adoption of the Agenda 2030, many authors have sounded the same horn. Time and again, cross-sector social partnerships (CSSP) have been viewed as inevitable when finding solutions to socio-economic problems that are growing both in number and complexity and transcending the problem-solving capacity of individual organizations and sectors (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a; Berger et al. 2004; Bryson et al. 2006; Clarke and Crane 2018; Reed and Reed 2009; Selsky and Parker 2005).

However, not all scholars agree with this positive view regarding the problem-solving capacity of such cross-sector social partnerships (CSSPs) (Hardy and Phillips 1998; Moog et al. 2015; Selsky and Parker 2005, 2010; Poncelet 2001). Even if one assumes that they have significant potential to do so, successfully implementing such partnerships is a challenging endeavor. For example, different sectors focus on different dimensions inherent in the concept of sustainability. Reconciling the economic, the environmental and the social is by no means an easy task, as conflicts between these three dimensions are prone to arise (Boström 2012; Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Węgrzyn 2019). More importantly in the context of this chapter, different sectors adhere to varying logics, which often compete with one another. For example, considering social and environmental concerns can challenge notions of corporate efficiency, while a focus on economic efficiency and profitability can eclipse concerns for social and environmental sustainability (Saz-Carranza and Longo 2012).

However, the existence of varying logics and the focus of distinct actors on different sustainability dimensions can also be the actual drivers of CSSPs. By acknowledging their own and others' strengths and weaknesses and by subsequently combining their unique resources and competencies, actors from different sectors might be able to generate value for society that could not be achieved by the individual efforts of organizations or sectors (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a; Selsky and Parker 2005).

How, then, does the existence of different institutional logics encourage and challenge the emergence and functioning of cross-sector social partnerships? In this chapter, we address this question by presenting a discussion on the most important drivers for, challenges to, and solution-mechanisms within CSSPs. We review and combine the literature on institutional logics and on cross-sector social partnerships to reflect on these aspects, in order to investigate how the existence of institutional logics influences cross-sector social partnerships. We illustrate our discussion by including a literature-based case study on one particular example of such a cross-sectoral endeavor: The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The FSC is a multi-stakeholder organization established in 1993 that—by means of standard setting and the accreditation of certifying organizations—aims to promote sustainable management of forests around the globe (Boström 2012; Malets 2017; Moog et al. 2015; Pattberg 2005; Taylor 2005). In the context of this chapter, the FSC is an interesting example for a number of reasons. First, since its establishment, it has included a diverse group of stakeholders from civil society and business, such as environmental and social NPOs, indigenous interest groups, trade unions, and timber traders and retailers (Auld et al. 2008; Moog et al. 2015; Pattberg 2005; Taylor 2005), which often have contending or even conflicting priorities and demands (Moog et al. 2015). Second, with its standards and principles, the FSC attends to all three dimensions of sustainability in that it aims to promote forest management that is environmentally appropriate (e.g., maintaining forest biodiversity), socially beneficial (e.g., incentivizing communities to sustain forest resources and enjoy their benefits in the long-term) and economically viable (e.g., ensure sufficiently profitable forest management) (Auld et al. 2008; Klooster 2005). Third, the FSC is often highlighted as a model of non-state governance with carefully elaborated governance mechanisms, aimed at ensuring, for example, balance of interests and power (Auld et al. 2008; Chan and Pattberg 2008; Moog et al. 2015). Fourth, in the course of its existence, the FSC experienced both considerable success and significant difficulties with respect to its objectives. Looking more closely at the Forest Stewardship Council thus offers the chance to investigate both the opportunities and challenges of cross-sector endeavors, and shine a light on potential mechanisms to address such challenges. By applying an institutional logics approach to CSSPs, we add a novel theoretical lens to the literature that seeks to explore the positive as well as the challenging aspects of such partnerships.

In the following section, we will briefly introduce the notions of cross-sector social partnerships and institutional logics. We then move on to discuss how different institutional logics can be drivers of and provide opportunities for cross-sector endeavors. Next, we will discuss challenges to partnerships stemming from different institutional logics before discussing some mechanisms, which offer potential for overcoming such difficulties. The last section concludes. Throughout the chapter, we insert sections on the Forest Stewardship Council in order to illustrate our theoretical thoughts with elements from the case-study.

2. Cross-Sector Social Partnerships and Institutional Logics

Cross-sector social partnerships (CSSPs) have been defined as longer-term and rather intensive interactions between organizations from different sectors that are formed to address economic, social and/or environmental issues. Many scholars view them as a powerful approach to complex socio-economic problems that are growing both in number and complexity, and transcend the problem-solving capacity of individual organizations and sectors. When actors from different sectors come together in collaborative endeavors, the argument goes, value is generated not only for individual organizations, but for society as a whole by means of different sectors combining their distinctive resources and competencies (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a; Berger et al. 2004; Bryson et al. 2006; Clarke and Crane 2018; Gray and Wood 1991; Reed and Reed 2009; Selsky and Parker 2005; Waddock 1991).

Institutional logics have been described as taken for granted rules (Hedberg et al. 1976), which are usually implicit and influence how actors interpret organizational reality and what they deem to be appropriate and legitimate behavior (Powell and DiMaggio 2012; March and Olsen 1989). Institutional logics consist of assumptions, values, beliefs and rules. They shape the way in which organizations are structured and what practices they adhere to (Van Huijstee et al. 2011), and they determine what answers and solutions are available and deemed appropriate by organizations in specific situations (Thornton and Ocasio 1999). By pointing out which issues, contingencies, or problems have to be considered relevant, institutional logics provide organizations with socially constructed categories for action (DiMaggio 1997; Thornton 2004) and help explain the appearance of a sense of common purpose and unity within an organizational field (Reay and Hinings 2009).

State actors, companies and nonprofits (NPOs)—all of whom are called upon to collaborate by Goal 17 of the Agenda 2030—each have their own logic[1]. While this should not be interpreted as meaning that all organizations within a sector are identical, paying attention to institutional logics still makes it possible to differentiate sectors along certain core characteristics they adhere to (Van Huijstee et al. 2011). Since the Forest Stewardship Council, which serves as a case study throughout this chapter, is composed of actors from the market and the civil society sector, in the following we will focus on the logics of these two sectors, and, more specifically, on the institutional logics of companies and nonprofits.

Companies can be assigned to market sector logics, i.e., they adhere to an economic rationale. According to this, the main objective of companies is to make profits by selling goods and services on the market. The underlying norms of decision-making are self-interest and increased efficiency. Among others, this can be ascribed to the fact that owners with economic interest (e.g., shareholders) hold the authority for decisions made by companies. The power of the market sector stems from its monetary resources, and companies can bring economic assets and profound knowledge of the workings of the market into collaborative endeavors (McMullin and Skelcher 2018; Thornton 2004; Van Huijstee et al. 2011).

NPOs, in contrast, can generally be assigned to civil society sector logics, adhering to a social rationale. They are usually associated with notions of altruism, the provision of public goods, and a strong commitment to social issues. Among others, this is due to the fact that the central unit of decision is often the organization's members, who represent wider community interests. The power of NPOs derives from collective group membership and a high degree of social trust. NPOs can bring, for example, environmental or social expertise and—as a result of public trust—legitimacy into cross-sector social partnerships (Kravchenko and Moskvina 2018; Thornton 2004; Van Huijstee et al. 2011).

As the comparison of market sector and civil society sector logics above shows, collaborative arrangements between companies and NPOs involve many challenges, as different logics can be hard to reconcile. Diverging interests, for example NPOs' altruistic versus companies' self-interested motivations, varying interpretations of what major societal challenges are and how these should be addressed, or different

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1 While it has been shown that it is not always the case that different sectors have different logics (e.g., (Ordonez Ponce 2018)), in this chapter we focus more strongly on competing sector logics.

preferences regarding decision-making processes, can generate tensions. In this sense, the existence of different institutional logics can act as an impediment to CSSPs.

On the other hand, in parts as a result of the adherence to core institutional logics, actors from different sectors develop specific resources and competencies. By acknowledging their own and others' strengths and limitations and combining their unique material and immaterial resources, actors from different sectors might find that they can create value for society that could not be achieved by the individual efforts of organizations or sectors (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a; Selsky and Parker 2005).

Applying an institutional logics approach to cross-sector social partnerships helps in investigating how competing logics can co-exist (Reay and Hinings 2009; Saz-Carranza and Longo 2012), to what extent shared logics can emerge (Bryson et al. 2006), and how a certain logic can come to dominate (Scott 2008; Thornton and Ocasio 1999). In sum, applying an institutional logics lens to cross-sector social partnerships offers a valuable approach to analyze how the existence of institutional logics can positively and negatively influence CSSPs in the field of sustainable development, i.e., to what extent they can act as drivers of such endeavors, how they can challenge such efforts, and what mechanisms can help ensure that different logics can be reconciled and integrated.

3. Different Institutional Logics as Drivers and Opportunities

On first sight, it would appear that the competing institutional logics of different sectors are difficult to overcome. Diverging assumptions, values, beliefs and rules would seem to act as a significant impediment to partnerships between different institutional actors forming and functioning. However, the existence of competing institutional logics does not preclude CSSPs from happening. Competing logics can co-exist (Reay and Hinings 2009; Saz-Carranza and Longo 2012) and shared logics can emerge (Bryson et al. 2006). Actors from different sectors that think about certain issues in different ways, envision different approaches to tackle societal issues and have different objectives in mind when doing so, can act as drivers and a source of strength for cross-sector social partnerships. In effect, they are lauded by various scholars for their unique ability to generate value exactly by integrating different sector logics. By combining distinct resources, expertise and competencies, it is argued, organizations from different sectors can create value jointly that they could not create on their own (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a; Selsky and Parker 2005). For example, through joint activities, technical and sector knowledge is shared, leading to broader perspectives on how to address societal problems (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a; Reed and Reed 2009; Vurro et al. 2010). In this way, NPOs might increase their ability and effectiveness in pursuing their mission, for example by improving their market intelligence. Companies might gain awareness of social issues and forces that they were not aware of before (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a). Collaborative interactions can thus support organizations in more clearly recognizing the causes of socio-economic challenges, in creating broader societal awareness of the urgency to act on these challenges and improve their capacity of addressing such challenges more effectively (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a; Selsky and Parker 2010).

4. Drivers and Opportunities: The Case of the FSC

The emergence of the FSC can be explained by a combination of factors, which led some companies and NPOs to realize that their interests might be best served by setting-up a joint approach for credible forest certification in order to curb global deforestation and forest degradation (Auld et al. 2008, p. 189; Chan and Pattberg 2008; Malets 2017; Pattberg 2005). During the 1980s, environmental organizations and other stakeholders became increasingly concerned with forest degradation (Auld et al. 2008) and started using campaigning tactics (e.g., boycotts) to put pressure on timber producers and retailers (Bartley 2003). Companies' reaction to such campaigns—such as labelling their own products to "prove" that forest products were sustainable—were harshly criticized by NPOs and negatively received by the wider public (Bartley 2003; Chan and Pattberg 2008). This led some companies to realize that their reputation was increasingly threatened, as they could, in effect, in many instances not account for the origin of their timber (Auld et al. 2008; Chan and Pattberg 2008), and might thus be well served with a credible certification scheme (Auld et al. 2008; Klooster 2005). At the same time, boycott strategies by NPOs were also increasingly criticized, as they were perceived as hurting forest-dependent populations in developing countries and as being ineffective with regards to addressing deforestation (Bartley 2003). Consequently, environmental groups—including some who were endorsing boycotts—began experimenting with alternative approaches, for example certification and monitoring efforts such as publishing guides on timber from sustainable sources (Bartley 2003). However, they had to recognize that tracking timber through complex supply chains was beyond their capacity. These factors—combined with the failure of states and inter-governmental organizations to effectively respond to the problem of global forest degradation—opened up a space for a closer partnership between civil society and market-sector interests and paved the way for the development of a private, market-based forest certification initiative (Auld et al. 2008; Bartley 2003; Chan and Pattberg 2008; Moog et al. 2015; Pattberg 2005).

The FSC is generally viewed as a rather successful endeavor in achieving sustainable forest management on a global scale. It has managed to include a significant amount of forest area and a large number of companies into its certification program (Garrelts and Flitner 2011; Moog et al. 2015). Furthermore, due to its substantive standards and principles—which make ample reference to all three dimensions of sustainable development—it is widely regarded as the global benchmark with regards to achieving sustainable forestry (Pattberg 2005; Malets 2017; Taylor 2005). The FSC evidently seeks to benefit from different sectors' strengths and tries to combine these to achieve its intended impact (Malets 2017; Pattberg 2005). In effect, the different sectoral members of the FSC have been able to reap substantial benefits from partnering with one another.

Companies participating in the FSC have benefitted from partnering with NPOs in a number of ways. As NPOs generally enjoy high legitimacy and a positive reputation, the inclusion of a wide range of NPOs within the FSC has delivered credibility to this particular forest certification system and, in extension, to the companies participating in it. In this sense, the FSC functions as an important instrument of risk-management for companies, which reduces their potential exposure to public criticism, as it increases the credibility of their efforts to trace the origin of their timber and avoid illegal deforestation (Klooster 2005; Taylor 2005). Furthermore, companies have been able to add to their market-knowledge by benefitting from the expertise concerning complex environmental and social issues of forest management that NPOs possess (Taylor 2005).

For NPOs, this particular collaborative effort has also resulted in a range of benefits. Through the FSC's system of standard setting and certification accreditation, NPOs have experienced success with regards to a number of issues that they consider important. Within the forest areas covered by the FSC certification system, the production process has improved both with respect to environmental and social sustainability dimensions. With respect to the environmental dimension, for example, biodiversity conservation has improved, and deforestation, as well as the negative impact of logging roads, wildfire incidents and pollution have decreased (Klooster 2005; Marx and Cuypers 2010). Regarding the social dimension, the FSC has fostered worker safety, and has been an important instrument for indigenous people and communities in securing land and resources (Taylor 2005). In sum, the use of a certification mechanism has supported NPOs in communicating the importance of and in achieving sustainable forest management (Klooster 2005).

5. Challenges Stemming from Different Institutional Logics

Arguably more apparent on first sight is the fact that competing institutional logics present major challenges both with respect to the formation and the functioning of cross-sector social partnerships.

As mentioned above, many scholars see significant potential in CSSPs to find solutions to societal issues that transcend the problem-solving capacity of individual organizations and sectors (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a; Berger et al. 2004; Bryson et al. 2006; Clarke and Crane 2018; Reed and Reed 2009; Selsky and Parker 2005). Others, however, are more skeptical with regards to this. Various authors contend that the solutions provided by such endeavors generally fail to question and significantly change prevailing institutional arrangements and thus fail to get to the roots of the problems underlying many major challenges that society is faced with (Hardy and Phillips 1998; Selsky and Parker 2005, 2010; Poncelet 2001).

Designing cross-sector endeavors in such a way that the different interests of all participants—especially minority concerns—are included and transparency and accountability are ensured is challenging (Moog et al. 2015). Considering competing logics and their influence on guiding the actors' actions, major impediments to the formation and functioning of CSSPs include, for example, diverging interests, mismatches of power, the lack of appropriate governance mechanisms or significant management costs (Austin and Seitanidi 2012b; Berger et al. 2004; Bryson et al. 2006).

As a result of their core logics and the concomitant focus on business or social/environmental priorities, respectively, the interests of the market and the civil society sector might significantly diverge (Selsky and Parker 2005). Diverging interests can lead to struggles among participants in CSSPs (Moog et al. 2015). For example, establishing which outcome should be achieved and how these can best be measured has been viewed as major challenge of cross-sector social partnerships, as the interests of companies and NPOs might significantly differ in this regard (Selsky and Parker 2005). Furthermore, NPOs' altruistic versus companies' self-interested motivations can generate antagonism or tensions in that an increase in community good can challenge an increase in corporate efficiency (Saz-Carranza and Longo 2012; Selsky and Parker 2005).

Power issues, i.e., power imbalances, are seen as major source of conflict in CSSPs (Bryson et al. 2006). Such power imbalances can stem, for example, from the fact that companies often have significantly larger financial resources at their disposal. Power imbalances can lead to situations where some partners' interests—for example with regard to shaping the agenda—are more strongly attended to than other partners' interests (Bryson et al. 2006; Selsky and Parker 2005).

Defining governance structures in a way that suits the interests of all partners and the needs of the collaborative endeavor can also be challenging. For example, balancing the different preferences of decision-making, i.e., who makes a decision and what the decision-making process looks like, can be challenging as market-logics might prefer single-authority and, thus, fast decision-making, and civil sector logics might prefer more democratic decision-making, which is more inclusive but also more time-consuming (Austin and Seitanidi 2012b; Bryson et al. 2006; Reay and Hinings 2009).

Furthermore, due to the need to negotiate different logics and interests, the more actors are involved in a shared project, the higher the costs to manage the endeavor. Collaborative endeavors come at costs that need to be weighed against their benefits (Austin and Seitanidi 2012b).

6. Challenges: The Case of the FSC

Although the FSC has been considered a fairly successful cross-sectoral endeavor (Garrelts and Flitner 2011; Moog et al. 2015), it has not been able to challenge and shape the timber market to the degree that it originally aimed for. The large majority of forest area certified according to FSC standards is situated in Europe and North America (Chan and Pattberg 2008; Taylor 2005). This, in turn, means that the FSC has not been able to tackle deforestation and forest degradation and offer the envisioned benefits to the most disadvantaged groups in the Global South to the extent envisioned (Garrelts and Flitner 2011; Klooster 2005; Malets 2017; Marx and Cuypers 2010; Pattberg 2005; Taylor 2005). While this partial failure is, in part, a result of external factors outside the influence of the FSC—such as weak consumer demand, international trade rules, or the existence of competing forestry eco-labels that put downward pressure on the FSC (Auld et al. 2008; Chan and Pattberg 2008; Klooster 2005; Marx and Cuypers 2010; Moog et al. 2015)—reasons for this can also be found in competing logics within the FSC.

The FSC has attempted to incentivize actors from the timber industry to make their forest management practices more sustainable by trying to create market demand for sustainable timber and by offering certification-related price premiums and reputation gains (Boström 2012; Klooster 2005; Malets 2017; Moog et al. 2015; Taylor 2005). This market-based strategy, however, has meant that the FSC, from the very beginning of its existence, has needed to juggle stakeholders' competing demands concerning different sustainability dimensions. Maybe the greatest challenge for the FSC has been balancing calls for stringent environmental and social standards regarding certification and calls for rapidly capturing a significant share of the timber market (Auld et al. 2008; Boström 2012; Moog et al. 2015). While many participating companies have been interested in market share and brand reputation, a large number of NPOs have been concerned with a possible watering-down of environmental and social standards due to this (Malets 2017; Pattberg 2005). The fact that the FSC allows the certification of plantations—some of which have been highly contested regarding their environmental and social consequences—and has included a mixed sources label, for example, has been continuously criticized by civil society sector organizations (Moog et al. 2015). Overall, it would seem that proponents of rapid market-share gain have asserted themselves against advocates for upmost stringency with respect to social and environmental standards. This seems to be, at least in part, a result of the power imbalances inherent in the FSC. Despite the fact that the FSC evidently attaches great importance to participation and equal representation (Malets 2017; Pattberg 2005), it has been repeatedly criticized for the dominance of its economic chamber, which is largely controlled by industry representatives, especially large retailers. Critics argue that the FSC has increasingly favored large-scale commercial interests over concerns for the highest standards regarding environmental and social sustainability (Garrelts and Flitner 2011, Klooster 2005; Taylor 2005). The power of buyers, especially retailers, has meant, for example, that they can make certification a requirement for market access and have been able to shift the costs of environmental management to forest managers, including small and community forest managers, without providing a price premium for forest owners (Garrelts and Flitner 2011; Klooster 2005). Since a clear price premium and significant niche markets for FSC certified products have failed to surface, small-scale community forests, for example, have found themselves at a competitive disadvantage, not least because they have found it hard or even impossible to meet the technical standards and cover the financial cost of certification (Boström 2012; Klooster 2005; Taylor 2005). Furthermore, less resource-endowed actors—especially groups from the Global South—have faced a limited ability to actively participate in the FSC standard-setting process (Baur and Arenas 2014; Malets 2017; Moog et al. 2015).

7. Overcoming Difficulties

As becomes apparent from the sections above, the existence of different institutional logics can challenge the formation and functioning of cross-sector social partnerships. However, scholars have defined the factors, mechanisms, and practices that facilitate CSSPs. For example, they have highlighted the central role of adequate governance and accountability mechanisms; the importance of paying close attention to (potential) power inequalities; the relevance of effective communication; and tolerance for conflict (Austin and Seitanidi 2012a, 2012b; Selsky and Parker 2010). At this point, it is important to note that collaborative endeavors are not a straightforward activity, but rather an iterative process involving continuous and extensive negotiations during which structures and operative process are adapted and, in the best of cases, stabilized (Austin and Seitanidi 2012b; Malets 2017).

Partners from different institutional contexts coming together often do not have a log of experience they can draw from and a clear-cut centralized direction they can follow (Bryson et al. 2006). Setting up functioning management and governance practices is thus essential to success. A clear definition of governance structures will facilitate partnership. This includes the definition of *who* takes decisions and the process of *how* decisions are taken, respectively (Bryson et al. 2006; Reay and Hinings 2009). Partners will have to decide whether there is a single authority making decisions or whether decision-making power is shared. The former will accelerate such a process, particularly when logics of different partners compete, and it is typically associated with market and corporate logic, where shareholders and board members hold such a power. The latter represents a more democratic form of decision-making and is more likely to allow for consensus and thus for more acceptance of decisions among partners. This democratic form of decision-making more strongly represents a nonprofit logic. With respect to governance and accountability, it is also crucial to involve all relevant stakeholders to make sure that all interests are considered and that all parties are heard to the same extent (Agranoff and McGuire 2001). Similarly, the specialization of tasks, and the division of labor need to be defined (Bryson et al. 2006). Having a clear responsibility distribution will give direction on what different actors work on. This further allows partners to focus on their individual strength and lead to a better output. A clear definition of tasks is particularly important when actors, whose logics compete, work together.

Effective communication is an important tool for moving toward a functioning co-existence of logics or even in the development of shared logics, as it allows for learning about each other's goals and perspectives, and avoids the misunderstanding and conflicts that may ultimately impede partnerships (Bryson et al. 2006; Nicholls and Huybrechts 2016; Selsky and Parker 2005). For example, functioning communication is an important antecedent for creating trust between partners. Trust is essential in that it allows for developing a partnership culture, recognizing linked interests, creating joint value and perceiving the exchange of value as fair (Austin and Seitanidi 2012b; Selsky and Parker 2005).

Despite all efforts to initiate smoothly working partnerships, conflicts due to diverging and competing logics are likely to occur (Bryson et al. 2006). Joint tolerance of conflict is needed on all sides (Nicholls and Huybrechts 2016). If such conflicts are managed in a constructive way, conflict can be an opportunity for learning and innovation.

In sum, the different logics of and potential power inequalities between collaborating actors make a clear definition of governance structures and decision-making processes indispensable. More democratic forms of decision-making and effective communication come at a cost, yet a resulting consensus among different actors can lead to more successful collaborative endeavors.

8. Overcoming Difficulties: The Case of the FSC

Based on the substantive negotiations of a broad stakeholder group, the FSC has institutionalized a governance and accountability system that strives for inclusive decision-making processes within the FSC and intensive documentation and audit mechanisms to ensure legitimacy. This governance structure is widely regarded as an exemplary set-up for a cross-sector collaborative arrangement, (Chan and Pattberg 2008; Garrelts and Flitner 2011; Klooster 2005). An institutionalized preference for consensus and the voting rules create preconditions for FSC members to engage in extensive negotiations and compromise building (Malets 2017). From the onset, the FSC has emphasized a balance of power between the environmental, social and economic interests of its members. The highest governing body of the FSC, the General Assembly, is organized according to a tripartite structure consisting of three chambers—an economic, an environmental and a social one—each of which holds one-third of the votes. Additionally, within each chamber—and thus throughout the whole organization—there is a voting parity between members from the Global North and the Global South (Auld et al. 2008; Boström 2012; Chan and Pattberg 2008; Garrelts and Flitner 2011). On a three-year basis, each chamber elects three representatives that subsequently serve on the FSC board of directors (Chan and Pattberg 2008), which is democratically accountable to its members (Baur and Arenas 2014; Chan and Pattberg 2008) and decides on most issues of major importance, such as the election of its executive director, the annual budget allocation or the approval of national representatives, standards and principles (Chan and Pattberg 2008; Garrelts and Flitner 2011; Malets 2017). The operational work of the FSC is coordinated by its secretariat in the German city of Bonn, and is supervised by the Executive Director (Chan and Pattberg 2008; Malets 2017) and the FSC also has various regional and national offices (Malets 2017). The General

Assembly—which gathers every three years—and the board decide on the general direction (e.g., 10 main principles and their criteria) and make the most important strategic decisions. Within the General Assembly, dominance of interest groups is unlikely, as decisions require two thirds of the votes (Chan and Pattberg 2008; Garrelts and Flitner 2011).

These important considerations relating to creating a level playing field also apply to the general principles and standards of the FSC, in which economic, social and ecological aspects are weighted equally (Auld et al. 2008; Boström 2012). Based on these general principles and criteria, country-specific rules are developed in a bottom-up manner within national—or even subnational—processes consisting of consultations or roundtables, in which, again, a voting balance according to the three chambers described above is in place (Auld et al. 2008; Boström 2012; Malets 2017).

The FSC also provides ample channels for stakeholder feedback and offers formal complaint procedures, both of which allow members—and, to some degree, external stakeholders—to have their say on decision and policy making and standard-setting within the FSC, thus guaranteeing accountability (Chan and Pattberg 2008; Malets 2017). For the most controversial or significant policy processes—such as plantation review (Klooster 2005)—the FSC establishes inclusive working groups to prepare reviews, collect feedback from internal and external stakeholders in public consultation and set up separate websites to ensure information accessibility, transparency of process and collection of feedback (Malets 2017).

Some of these elements—for example the dispute procedures—have been implemented and refined as a response to internal and public criticism, serving to show that the FSC is willing and capable to extensively deal with the criticism directed at it (Chan and Pattberg 2008; Malets 2017). For example, regarding the critique of power imbalance, the FSC was restructured to promote a better balance of influence and interests, establishing nondiscriminatory and flexible standards for local conditions, developing new guidelines for regional standards, implementing group certification and channeling more support to social chamber meetings. In 2001, the FSC outlined a social strategy to better serve the needs of local community forest users, indigenous peoples, forest workers and small and low-intensity forest users (Garrelts and Flitner 2011). Challenges are continuously problematized and the FSC responds to problems by revising its rules and procedures and addressing implementation issues in transnational and domestic venues (Malets 2017).

In sum, throughout its existence, the FSC has put emphasis on comprehensive governance mechanisms that allow for compromise building and a power balance among the different interests present within the scheme, and has been capable of reacting to criticism by refining existing or developing new governance mechanisms. This strategy of pro-actively addressing challenges and seeing difference as opportunity has allowed the FSC to successfully address many potential problems arising from the fact that actors with different institutional logics are part of this certification scheme. Table 1 summarizes the presented discussion on the drivers and challenges of, as well as solution-mechanisms to, CSSPs, taking the FSC as an example.

Table 1. Summary of Drivers, Challenges, and Solution-Mechanisms to cross-sector social partnerships (CSSPs). Source: Own illustration.

	Literature Review	The Forest Stewardship Council
Drivers	• Sharing distinct resources, knowledge, expertise, and capacities; • Better capacity to identify causes of societal problems; • Broader perspective on and more effective solutions to societal problems.	• Companies: Increased credibility and positive reputation of certification system, better risk management and market intelligence, gained expertise on forest-management; • NPOs: more effective and wider goal attainment through better forest management, increased biodiversity, decreased pollution, and worker safety.
Challenges	• Divergent interests, power mismatch, lack of appropriate governance mechanisms, increased management costs; • Little inclusion of interests of minorities, weak transparency and accountability; • Risk of superficial solutions to societal problems rather than profound changes in institutional arrangements.	• NPOs: watering down of certification standards due to large-scale commercial interests, focus on Europe and North America, failure to include and protect forestation industry in the Global South; • Companies: high certification costs for small businesses, limited participation of businesses in the Global South in definition of standards.
Solution-Mechanisms	• Adequate governance and accountability systems; • Awareness of and close attention to (potential) power-inequalities; • Effective communication, clear responsibility and task distribution, and tolerance for conflict; • Partnership as iterative process of negotiations and learning during which structures and operative processes are adapted.	• Implementation of inclusive decision-making processes and preference for consensus; • Emphasis on power-balance between economic, social, and environmental interests; • Triparty structure of General Assembly; • Voting parties representing the Global North and South; • Bottom-up definition of standards accounting for economic, social, and environmental concerns; • Feedback channels for external stakeholders; • Public reviews to address criticism.

9. Conclusions

By reviewing and combining the literature on cross-sector social partnerships and institutional logics—and by specifically examining the case of the Forest Stewardship Council—in this chapter we put forward the question of how the existence of different institutional logics can both encourage and challenge the emergence and functioning of CSSPs that, in turn, allows for successfully addressing pressing and complex societal challenges. More specifically, we investigated how the existence of varying institutional logics can act as drivers of and impediments to CSSPs, and what solution-mechanisms can be put into place for ensuring the success of such collaborative endeavors.

The FSC provides ample evidence for the fact that different institutional logics can act as important drivers for setting up CSSPs in the first place and ensure their long-term success. In light of increasing public concern regarding on-going forest degradation and deforestation and widespread criticism of business-as-usual and conventional approaches by nonprofits, in the early 1990s both market and civil society actors recognized that they could benefit from combining their respective resources and knowledge concerning forest management. Since the creation of the FSC, both the market sector and civil society actors have been able to reap the benefits of this joint initiative. For example, companies have benefitted from the positive reputation bestowed on them by NPOs participating in the scheme and have been able to access latter's expertise regarding environmental and social issues surrounding forest management. NPOs, in turn, have been able to implement their mission more effectively, as—within FSC certified forests—forest management practices have improved with respect to environmental and social sustainability. Today, the FSC is widely regarded as the global benchmark with regards to achieving sustainable forestry. An important ingredient of this success has been its comprehensive governance structure, which allows for extensive negotiations, compromise-building and a balance of power between the environmental, social and economic interests of its members. Such comprehensive governance, accountability and communication mechanisms have been identified in the literature as important prerequisites for functioning CSSPs.

Nevertheless, despite this well-thought-through governance structure, the FSC has faced significant challenges with regards to balancing economic, social and environmental interests. Critics argue that the FSC has increasingly favored large-scale commercial interests over concerns for the highest standards regarding environmental and social sustainability. It would appear that this has been an important impediment to the FSC in more effectively tackling forest degradation and deforestation on a global scale, as, due to dominant economic interests, especially more disadvantaged groups in the Global South have been partially excluded from taking part in the FSC certification scheme, which has made it difficult for the FSC to tackle one of its major objectives: tropical deforestation.

At the same time, the FSC has been capable of reacting to such criticism. For example, some of the mechanisms it has introduced, such as dispute procedures or attempts to better serve the needs of local community forest users and indigenous people, have been implemented as a response to internal and public criticism.

In sum, as the example of the FSC shows, different institutional logics should by no means be seen as unsurmountable obstacles for the implementation of successful CSSPs. Rather, they are important drivers of such endeavors and an important prerequisite for value-creation within these cross-sectoral efforts. Yet, caution with respect to over-optimistic calls for such cross-sectoral social partnerships is advised. Even the FSC with its comprehensive governance-mechanisms has experienced significant challenges, and has only been able to meet its objectives to a limited degree.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.H. and N.A.; writing—original draft preparation, A.H. and N.A.; writing—review and editing, A.H. and N.A.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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A Conceptual Overview of How and Why to Evaluate Partnership

Oto Potluka

1. Introduction

Partnership is understood as a cooperation among relevant stakeholders, including public, public-private, private, and civil society organizations (for example, nonprofit organizations, associations). Such a cooperation aims at improving the relevance of projects, programs, and policies, and the sustainability of their outputs (Audit Commission 1998, p. 43; OECD 2001). A sense of co-responsibility and co-ownership by all partners stands behind the increased relevance and sustainability (Iftikhar 2012). Another added value of partnership relates to enabling partners to share a pool of resources and its better use (Audit Commission 1998, pp. 44–46). The presence of partnership as the goal 17 among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underlines its importance for sustainable development.

SDGs are well covered by sub-goals (targets) and indicators to monitor their performance. This also concerns the Sustainable Development Goal No. 17 (hereafter SDG17), to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (UN 2016), which is of our consideration. There are 19 targets and 25 monitoring indicators under the SDG17. These targets and indicators cover finance, technology, capacity-building, trade, and systemic issues (UN 2015, 2016). From this perspective, it is not a methodologically difficult task to monitor the progress in achieving the targets, but it still does not say anything about the efficiency, effectiveness, or impact of SDG17, as this is a task for evaluators.

There is a difference in the use of monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring is a managerial continuous activity, with the aim to keep projects on track and check progress according to pre-defined objectives and indicators, as is also the case of the SDG17. Moreover, it helps to make corrections if the implementation is not heading towards the pre-defined objectives. An evaluation makes a judgement about the projects and policies and assesses their success or failure in relation to relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability (Morra Imas and Rist 2009, p. 108). Evaluation is used more for learning purposes than monitoring. A project that has not achieved its goals can be used for learning purposes, and evaluations can provide managers and policymakers with information on how to perform better. From this perspective, we see that the practice is oriented towards the monitoring of SDG17, while evaluations are rare.

Even though there exist evaluations of partnerships, they concern mainly processes of establishing and managing of partnerships. This points out several aspects of high relevance for constituting successful partnerships and their impacts on the success of the policies implemented in partnerships. These aspects include transparency, shared goals, and values (Demidov 2015; Gazley 2010; Potluka and Liddle 2014), long-term cooperation (Gazley 2010; Milio 2014), and trust and equality among partners (Adshead 2014; Demidov 2015; Valerie Wildridge et al. 2004). Successes and failures of partnerships are affected by the processes, including communication, variability of opinions, and timing (Potluka et al. 2017; Valerie Wildridge et al. 2004). For the success of public-private partnership projects, Węgrzyn (2016) also adds personnel and management capacities, and the capability to solve unexpected problems.

This raises questions on whether the SDG17 targets contribute to the intended sustainable development. For example, the goal to encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships (goal 17.17), is measured by the amount of money spent. Thus, it is easy to monitor performance. However, it neither says anything about the quality of partnerships established and implemented nor about their achievements. Does this mean that partnership is a nice wording, but only a formal issue among the SDGs? How can the partnership contribute to SDGs fulfillment? These are the crucial questions, but they are methodologically challenging to answer.

The principle of partnership and its implementation into the formation and decision-making processes within the development policies has been strongly accentuated. Still, in international development policies, a systematic evaluation of the actual implementation of partnership has been rather exceptional (Brinkerhoff 2002). This chapter reacts to this research gap, and focuses on several cases where the partnership principle has been evaluated. While there is a lack of evaluations under the SDG17, other policies provide some evaluation cases, which we utilize to set up an evaluation framework in the contribution. Together with the literature on evaluations, the chapter provides a framework to answer why and how to evaluate the partnership.

Our contribution aims to answer the above-stated questions, and tries to fill the gap in our understanding of the evaluation of partnerships. The novelty of the contribution is in the building of an evaluation framework, combined approach of seven purposes to conduct evaluations, with standard evaluation criteria, and criteria for the implementation of optimal partnerships. We do that by an overview of partnership evaluation experience from various countries, respecting their differences in state traditions, diverse policy styles, and distinct local contexts (Sweco et al. 2016).

The chapter is organized as follows: in Section 2, we discuss the theme of partnership implementation in various countries. We do that to answer the question "why" while documenting variability and dependence of partnership on indigenous practices and cultural differences in ways of partnership implementation. In Section 3, we discuss the evaluation framework to answer "what" to evaluate within the partnership and what criteria define optimal partnerships. Section 4 introduces general evaluation criteria—relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts, and sustainability when evaluating partnerships. The final Section 5 concludes.

2. Uneasy Implementation of Partnership—Why to Evaluate Partnership

Implementation of partnership relates to various aspects of publicly funded policies and programs. The game theory theoretically explains the added-value of partnerships in better outcomes achieved by the collaboration in comparison to competitive approaches (see, for example, the prisoner´s dilemma game) (McQuaid 2000). Usually, among the most credited positive effects of a partnership are the better relevance of policies, the exchange of knowledge and learning among partners, rising awareness about policies, and the transparency of political decisions (Bache 2010; Leonardi 2006; Lowndes and Skelcher 1998; Stadtler 2015; Sweco et al. 2016). The participation of stakeholders helps to redress democratic deficits (Lane 2010) and improves the relevance of policies and programs (OECD 2001), as well as their effectiveness, by sharing resources (Mairate 2006) and avoiding duplicate activities (Valerie Wildridge et al. 2004). On the other side, it is necessary to keep in mind that the different capacities, interests and agendas of stakeholders in a partnership can prevent successful implementation (Chang et al. 2015), and can cause disillusionment among partners (Potluka et al. 2017). Moreover, interest groups can influence the decisions by rent-seeking (Milio 2014), which in turn can harm other stakeholders, especially those with insufficient skills. Thus, it can lead to low accountability and pointing out democratic deficit (Geissel 2009; Perron 2014; Peters and Pierre 2004; Scharpf 2007). Another problem relates to the principal–agent relationship in EU cohesion policy (Blom-hansen 2007). Partnerships often do not achieve the intended goals, because the agent provides the principal, with the information on the ground that is specific to his or her own serve interests, but do not really serve the mutually agreed goal. Such a situation leads to low financial compliance and financial corrections (Mendez and Bachtler 2017).

The inconclusiveness of views on partnership calls for partnership to be evaluated more rigorously, to know what effects partnership achieves and how to improve its implementation.

Among the 19 of the SGD17 targets, 12 quote “developing countries” or “Global South”, but the potential pitfalls of partnerships are also a concern in developed countries. Hodge and Greve (2017) point out the inconclusiveness of evaluations of public-private partnerships. Another case concerns partnership belonging to one of the fundamental and long-term horizontal principles in the European Union (Piattoni 2009), specifically in the EU cohesion policy (European Commission 2014b). The need for partnerships in shaping and implementing policies and measures is grounded, among others, in The European Code of Conduct on Partnership (European Commission 2014b). This document intends to help the implementation of partnerships by including a list of groups of partners potentially relevant for partnership with the public sector in implementing EU cohesion policy funded programs. Partners should be the relevant stakeholders, with competences and capacities to participate actively and effectively. The broad definition covers all relevant stakeholders from the public sector, economic and social partners, the business sector, and civil society. The document (European Commission 2014b) describes not only who could be the partners, but also key factors for their effective involvement. The Code of Conduct keeps attention on the accessibility of relevant information, sufficient time for commenting on the investment programs and proposing communication channels.

Though the Code of Conduct on Partnership provides guidelines, its implementation is not legally binding (Sweco et al. 2016, p. XVII). It leaves space for the EU member states to respect their national specificities when implementing it. The document defines principles, but it is not a technical guide on implementation. Thus, the partnership principle applied in the framework of EU cohesion policy is not only a tool at the level of projects’ implementation, but also a political tool enabling the relevant social partners like nonprofit sector to participate in political decision-making (Bache 2010). This flexible application enables national governments to implement it according to national specifics, and avoid it when there is a lack of willingness among the participating parties.

In Europe, the intensity and quality of partnership principle applications vary, especially between the public and nonprofit sectors. While the partnership is well documented and implemented in some countries (for example, in Austria or the Netherlands, see in (Sweco et al. 2016)), in others, an extension of the partnership principle beyond the national habits was promoted with the implementation of EU cohesion policy. This concerns especially countries in Central and Eastern Europe, due to a strong central government from the times of socialism (until the end of the 1980s). Political systems in these countries use a minimal scale of participatory methods in political decision-making (Batory and Cartwright 2011; Baun and Marek 2008; Cartwright and Batory 2012; Potluka and Liddle 2014). Similar situations also appear in Greece, Portugal, and Spain (Polverari and Michie 2009). Non-participatory approach of the public sector often resulted in non-functional, often even artificial partnerships being established at the project level, just to have a partnership in a project. The capacity to successfully manage the PPP projects and political willingness to promote them is low in these countries (Mysiorski 2013). For example, Węgrzyn (2016) points out that, in Poland, about 75% of PPP projects fail. At the policy level, the situation was similar, due to low knowledge of the civil society, and other stakeholders among the public sector servants, and unclear representativeness of the delegates invited to take part in partnership (Potluka et al. 2017). In some cases, stakeholders from the public sector set up nonprofit organizations to have a partner formally meet the requirement of the funding schemes (Potluka and Fanta 2020). These organizations were not real partners, as they were politically dependent on their founding fathers.

In this relation, Kovách and Kučerová (2006) describe the emergence of the "Project Class" in connection with the implementation of EU cohesion policy in Central Europe. It is an entirely new social class, strongly linked to the implementation of the funding from EU cohesion policy. This class' main activity is the preparation, consultancy, or implementation of projects financed from European funds. Consultants belong to a typical example. Many consultancy companies were set up solely to provide consultancy, with preparation of application for and managing EU funding. These companies would not exist without EU funding appearance. Their experience is hardly applicable beyond the system of EU funding.

Distinguishing traditional organizations from those that exist primarily through the implementation of EU cohesion policy could provide better information on the true nature of partnerships. In particular, for the quality of partnership, it is crucial to know whether the organizations do their activities primarily because of their target groups or they are rather organizations from project classes, i.e., existing solely due to the funding. Moreover, the aspect of a potential conflict of interest has not been monitored by evaluation. A typical example is a situation in which partners are members in working groups or monitoring committees of programs, and at the same time they are applicants for support.

Results of partnership implementation differ according to political culture, political decision making styles, and institutions (Dąbrowski et al. 2014). This long-term situation is also confirmed by the study of Polverari and Michie (2009), who point at two sets of factors influencing the extent of partnership. First, formal administrative practices constitute the major factor with an impact on how the partnership is implemented. Second, traditions and the experience of regional and socio-economic partners make the difference in the success and failure of partnerships. The differences in the implementation of the partnership principle relate not only to national levels, but they also differ at regional and local levels (Rinaldi 2016). These differences underline the importance of institutional factors, territorial specificities, local contexts, and individual decision-makers in making partnerships a success (Sweco et al. 2016, pp. 2–3).

Often, the capacities of partners play a crucial role. Usually, stakeholders with the highest need of assistance are the stakeholders with the weakest capacities, which undermines the effectiveness of the programs (Turrent and Oketch 2009). Moreover, the lack of resources impacts the acceptance of the form of mutual collaboration. For example, if some stakeholders do not get reimbursement for the costs incurred by the meetings (travel costs and time spent on meetings), they will prefer doing their primary work and not taking part on partnership. As Polverari and Michie (2009) and Allen et al. (2017) point out, the low capacity of partners harms their ability to take part in the programming processes efficiently. Usually, such partners suffer from a lack of expertise, and they cannot systematically engage with programs.

Another frequent problem in creating partnerships relates to insufficient partners´ relationships. Especially, where societies are in a transition period, the relationships are still not set up. In such a case, it often happens that the collaboration is rather short-term, the partners leave and new ones enter the partnership. In this relation, the evaluations often discussed whether the selected representatives of the civil society were the ones representing that sector as a whole (see, for example, the changing composition of working groups in (Potluka et al. 2017)).

Evaluation serves various objectives. Owen (2004) sees the purpose of evaluation in the following benefits: synthesis, clarification, improvement, rescheduling and checking, and learning/accountability. Based on this classification, Batterbury (2006) goes further, and defines the following seven evaluation objectives using the example of EU cohesion policy, which can be used as evaluation criteria, including recommended methods.

(A) *Accountability and legitimacy* of policy cover evaluating whether a policy achieved desired outcomes and impacts and is oriented towards effectiveness. It usually applies a summative approach. Among the methods, Batterbury (2006) recommends impact assessment, theories of change, realist evaluation, econometric modeling of outcomes, and performance indicators.

(B) *Improved quality and performance* cover questions of achieving performance targets and aims to help the evaluated policy improve its performance. Evaluators apply performance assessment or formative approaches. This objective is evaluated by performance indicators or a realist evaluation approach.

(C) *Better planning and program design* are aimed at evaluating and improving the theory of change and the logic staying behind the policy. Together with ex-ante evaluation, the methods used are similar, as in the case of accountability and legitimacy (Batterbury 2006).

(D) *Enhanced capacity* covers criteria for assessing success, what to do to achieve better results, and how to understand the policy better. Formative and learning-focused approaches are used. Synthesis, meta-evaluations, and realist evaluation belong to methods applied.

(E) *Learning* has an explanatory role in understanding why the policy has the observed effects, what can be taken for other policies and what unintended effects appeared. By learning, evaluators use formative approaches, by similar methods, as in the case of evaluation of enhanced capacities.

(F) *Increased ownership of the program and/or of the evaluation*—participants play a crucial role, as they define criteria to assess the success of the policy and needs of change. Thus, they get control over the policy. Participatory evaluation belongs to approaches on how to evaluate programs within this objective.

(G) *Empowerment of stakeholders* is a further step in the involvement of participants, as evaluators evaluate whether the goals of participants change during the lifetime of the policy and how the participants evaluate success. Participatory and democratic evaluations belong to approaches on how to evaluate this objective.

The objectives A–C are the most common use of evaluations in EU cohesion policy, while F–G belong among the rare objectives of evaluations in this policy.

To conclude on the question of why to evaluate the partnership, variations in partnership implementation, and problems that partners face are strong arguments for differentiating of effects, outputs, and outcomes of partnership. It comprises also a strong need for conducting evaluations to learn how to perform better partnerships. We see many positive attributes of partnership, but also problems, at the same time, depending on whether the economic or political performance is evaluated (Hodge and Greve 2017). The partnership has a great potential to positively contribute to policymaking and policy implementation, but at the same time, it is not easy to implement. Several conditions should be met to achieve a long-term sustainable partnership with positive effects. We will discuss them in the following section.

3. Evaluation Framework—What Criteria to Apply to Evaluate Quality of Partnership?

Although many papers discussed evaluations of SDGs generally, the overview of studies contributing to evaluations and SDGs shows that these evaluations usually avoid evaluating SDG17 (Avtar et al. 2019; Zhu et al. 2018). For example, Zhu et al. (2018) used indicators to evaluate several SDGs, but in the case of SDG17, they concluded that, for China, the evaluation of SDG17 is not relevant. Another paper (Avtar et al. 2019) simply skipped the evaluations of SDG16 and 17, without a clear explanation.

Of the whole sample of papers collected for the purpose of this contribution, only a limited number concerned the evaluation of SDG17 directly (Allen et al. 2017; Khan et al. 2018). Even when SDG17 is part of an evaluation, the study is limited to an overview of the fulfillment of the indicators (Allen et al. 2017) or using a descriptive methodology (Khan et al. 2018). On the other side, we understand why the authors chose their approach. In contrast to SDG1-15, the actual outputs of SDG17 are not a tangible investment, but relationships; therefore, their evaluation is methodologically more challenging.

In order to facilitate the solving of the methodological obstacle of evaluation of partnerships, EU cohesion policy helps to define an evaluation framework. This policy commands a budget of 351.8 billion EUR for the period 2013–2020 (European Commission 2015). This large investment aims at the core development objectives, like economic growth, job creation, competitiveness of companies, sustainable development, and quality of life (European Commission 2014a). The advantage of EU cohesion policy is that it covers all EU member states, and thus there are many options to evaluate it. Moreover, the EU cohesion policy share on public investment plays a crucial role in many countries (all Central and Eastern European countries, but also Portugal), where it makes half of all public investment (European Commission 2017, p. xxii). Such funding provides an opportunity for various evaluation exercises.

From the perspective of evaluations, EU cohesion policy belongs to evaluation-leading policies in Europe (Ferry 2009, p. 14). Some studies even argue that the evaluation culture in Europe has grown up around this policy (Højlund 2014). Because partnership is defined and recommended at all political decision-making levels in this policy (European Commission 2014b), and some evaluations already exist, we take the evaluation experience from this policy and build the conceptual framework based on it.

The previous section explained the importance of partnership and why to evaluate it. Still, we need to respond to what aspects of partnership to evaluate and how to evaluate them. Based on studies by Gazley (2010); Milio (2014); Potluka and Liddle (2014), who evaluated partnership implemented within EU cohesion policy, we take the following seven characteristics of partnership to point out the core aspects defining optimal partnership. Hodge and Greve (2017) apply a similar approach when evaluating public-private partnerships based on risk sharing, innovation, working together, commonness of the collaboration, and length of the collaboration. These aspects can be used as criteria to evaluate the quality of partnership, implemented when evaluating processes in partnerships generally.

(1) *Declared and shared common goals of the partners:* The objectives of the partnership are clearly defined, and all partners understand them the same way. The goals are published, and thus available to all relevant stakeholders. Usually, the most time-consuming and challenging part of partnership concerns setting up and the discussion on goals and their understanding. Moreover, goals can change in time according to circumstances. In such a case, the partnership needs to re-assess them again.

(2) *Mutual benefits of the cooperation:* Each partner gets added value out of their taking part in a partnership. It seems to be a natural requirement, but if any partner gets no added value, this requirement is violated, even if all other requirements are met, and other partners get at least some added value (and the overall added value is positive).

(3) *Long-term relationship*: The partnership was not set up only for a short-term goal (for example, to apply for funding due to a formal requirement of a call for proposals and ends with the end of a project). It is difficult to evaluate a newly established partnership, though the sustainability of partnership is still a relevant factor. This factor covers also trust among partners, which is pointed out by some authors as another distinct characteristic (Valerie Wildridge et al. 2004). Without trust, a partnership will be only of short-term duration.

(4) *Full acceptance of the content and form of cooperation by all partners:* Each partner accepts the style of work of the partnership. Thus, the format of cooperation does not provide any advantage to any partner above the others. The same also applies to a disadvantage.

(5) *Each partner contributes to what is missing, without which results cannot be achieved.* Each partner provides added value to the partnership. Otherwise, its membership is questionable.

(6) *The synergistic effect ensures that the overall positive effect is greater than the sum of each participant's effects.* Not only does each partner obtain an added value (as defined in point two), but the results would not exist if the cooperation among the partners was missing. Measuring of the synergistic effect belongs among the most challenging task and relates to the question of what gets each partner in the sense of input and output.

(7) *Joint decision-making by which decisions comprise all opinions and are unanimous:* Achieving consent is a very timely and consuming process. Pressure on quick decisions can easily harm the whole partnership. Moreover, the responsibilities for political decision-making are given to politicians by the political system. Thus, it makes this condition difficult to fulfill, and needs to define the partners' responsibilities and the willingness of politicians to hear the voices of others.

To the literature set relating to evaluations of SDG17, we also added papers evaluating partnerships in EU cohesion policy. We have added reports from evaluations of partnership, of which four were conducted at the national level (IREAS centrum et al. 2011; Navreme Boheme 2008; Potluka et al. 2017; Tima Liberec and Morava 2008), two scientific articles using comparative international studies (Batory and Cartwright 2011; Dąbrowski 2014), and three meta-evaluations at the European level (Polverari and Michie 2009; Spatial Foresight 2015; Sweco et al. 2016).

Table 1 summarizes the aforementioned evaluations of the partnership principle carried out. The table shows that individual evaluations of the partnership in EU cohesion policy cover various objectives according to the above typology. Over time, growing experience has emerged on how many objectives the evaluations serve.

Based on a critical analysis, these evaluations were assessed according to which of the seven evaluation objectives they cover. From the comparison, it is evident that accountability and legitimacy are the fundamental objectives of all evaluations. The evaluators simply compared the planned and required processes and results with the actual ones, through interviews, surveys, and desk research, including investigating datasets. This evaluation objective was present in all studied cases, while the more demanding objectives like ownership and empowerment appeared only in five cases, and simultaneously only in two of them. In the cases of participatory evaluation approaches (evaluation objectives ownership and empowerment), evaluations were done, at least partially, by interested participants or staff of the program.

Table 1. Objectives of realized evaluations of the partnership principle.

	Accountability and Legitimacy	**Improving Quality and Performance**	**Improving Planning**	**Capacity Building**	**Learning**	**Ownership among Participants**	**Empowerment**
Tima Liberec and Morava (2008)	√						
Navreme Boheme (2008)	√	√		√	√		
IREAS centrum et al. (2011)	√	√	√	√	√		
Allen et al. (2017)	√	√	√	√			√
Sweco et al. (2016)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Allen et al. (2017)	√						
Khan et al. (2018)	√						
Spatial Foresight (2015)	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Batory and Cartwright (2011)	√					√	
Dąbrowski (2014)	√	√	√	√	√		
Polverari and Michie (2009)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Source: Own elaboration based on Batterbury (2006).

The comparison of the studies shows that in the same period, but in various programs, the partnership was evaluated differently. See, for example, a Czech evaluation done by Tima Liberec and Morava (2008), an evaluation primarily focused on describing how partnerships were formed, and thus whether the partnerships are legitimate. The evaluation was predominantly of a qualitative (descriptive) nature, without evaluating quantitative data.

On the contrary, during the same period in the Czech Republic, Navreme Boheme (2008) pursued several evaluation objectives. In addition to assessing the fulfillment and identification of the benefits of international partnerships, the aim of the evaluation was, among other things, to identify the added value of the Community Initiative Program EQUAL to existing instruments and policies in the labor market, identify and examine appropriate practices in implementing to create expert capacities or to enable the use of acquired knowledge in the following programming period. At the same time, at the international level in a meta-evaluation, Polverari and Michie (2009) applied the whole scale of evaluation objectives to the evaluation of partnership. However, in the case of ownership, empowerment, and building capacities, the evaluation touched these evaluation objectives only partially.

The studies of Polverari and Michie (2009), Allen et al. (2017), Sweco et al. (2016), Spatial Foresight (2015) and Dąbrowski (2014) belong to the most complex studies in the sample. These evaluations also touched on the topics of the legislative and institutional framework for fulfilling the partnership principle. These evaluations study the legal framework, institutional settings (both by desk research), and behavior of partners (observations, interviews, surveys, and desk research again). The evaluation studies conclude that partnership helps the feasibility and benefits of projects, better meeting the needs of target groups. Moreover, they found out that partnership helps to build the capacity of beneficiaries and partners, increasing the effectiveness of financed projects based on partnership.

A comparison of the evaluations shows that evaluators' experience with evaluating partnerships develops over time. It also relates to the experience of partners with the implementation of the partnership. Thus, they can provide more relevant information on partnership implementation. For example, Allen et al. (2017) compared the experience with the partnership of both the public sector and the civil society organizations between two programming periods. The authors conclude that both sides of the partnership learned how to collaborate and develop a functioning partnership, even with some prevailing obstacles. The knowledge of previous evaluations also provides evaluators and the partners with some experience on which they can build their capacities.

4. General Evaluation Criteria—How to Evaluate Partnership?

Evaluators do their evaluations in a complex environment. Not only factors influencing partnership, but also factors supporting or obstructing evaluations play a role. It concerns factors like for whom, when, with what resources do the evaluators conduct their task, and in what political processes, and politics (King and Alkin 2018). Although it might seem that evaluation would be an easy task when there is a set of monitoring indicators for the SDGs in place, the actual situation is different. It relates especially to the case of SDG17.

Generally, evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impacts are applied. Their relationship to socio-economic needs, programs and policies can be seen on Figure 1.

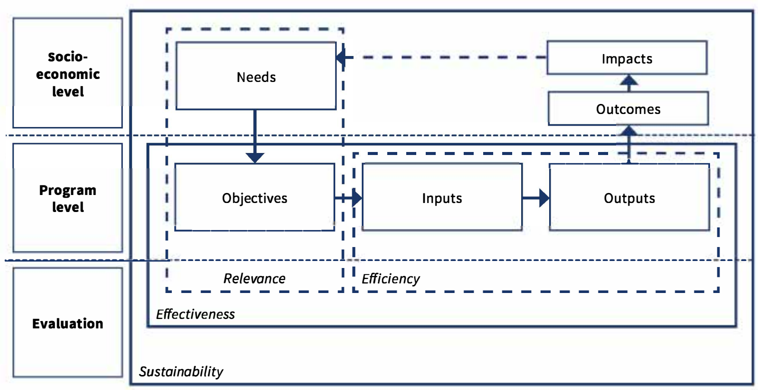

Figure 1. Evaluation criteria in relation to socio-economic needs and programs. Based on European Commission (2004, p. 7) and Potluka (2010, p. 91).

From the point of view of the evaluation of relevance, it is possible to use the definition criteria of the optimal partnership according to the previous studies (Gazley 2010; Milio 2014; Potluka and Liddle 2014), as mentioned above. By evaluating the application of these criteria, evaluators can also conduct a scale of relevance of policies and programs achieved, according to the relationships between social needs and objectives of policies and programs. Not all of the criteria have the same weight for the relevance of the final scope of the policies. Criteria related to shared objectives (1) in the above-mentioned list); mutual benefits of cooperation (2); acceptance of the format of cooperation between the partners (4); the necessity of each of the partners (5) and the contribution of the partners to what would not otherwise be achieved (6) are particularly important for evaluating relevance. Less important criteria include a long-term relationship between the partners (3), especially in situations where long-term relationships are still being formed, and the unanimity of decisions (7). Unanimous decision-making needs a long-term culture with high social capital, and in many countries, this requires a long process for which there is not enough time. Therefore, taking into account local habits, the criteria 3 and 7 can be used with a lower weight than the others.

The evaluation of effectiveness focuses on whether the planned objectives have been achieved. In the case of SDG17, it might seem that monitoring indicators can be used, but fulfilling the indicators is not an objective in itself for SDGs, but a means. The long-term goal of SDG17 is to increase the capacity of target groups through partnerships, especially in countries in need of assistance. The evaluation of effectiveness clearly shows how important the relevance of goals and their link to social needs is (achieving poorly defined goals will not help). An evaluation of effectiveness can be conducted based on SMART criteria known from management theories. If the objectives were not achieved (or achieved too easily), they must be checked according to their (i) specificity (whether they are simple, sensible, and significant); (ii) measurability (whether they are meaningful and motivating enough); (iii) achievability (whether the objectives were agreed by stakeholders and whether they are attainable); (iv) relevancy (reasonability, whether they are realistic and covered by resources, and results-based; evaluation of relevance is part of this task); and (v) time-bound.

The evaluation of efficiency works with what is invested in the program or policy as inputs and what outputs were achieved by these inputs. It is like the efficiency of a combustion engine, where a ratio of useful work done to the heat provided is defined as efficiency. In the case of this evaluation criterion, it is appropriate to do more tests, so that the evaluators have comparisons between different ways of fulfilling the partnership. For example, it can be done by comparisons of different methods of communication and negotiation between partners, or different ways of implementing policies and programs (like grant-making or direct investment in development assistance).

When evaluating impacts, the evaluators apply experimental and quasi-experimental methods. Such a type of evaluation is demanding on pre-intervention and post-intervention data (Khandker et al. 2010). Thus, they must be planned already when designing the evaluated policy, or depend on secondary data available independently on the evaluated policy or programs. For example, Potluka and Fanta (2020) used the propensity score matching method to assess the impacts of various composition of partnerships on how attractive rural communities are for migrants.

On the one hand, the planned impacts are evaluated as the situation when the social problem, or need, is solved. In addition, unintended effects, both positive and negative, may also appear during implementation. For the positive ones, no one usually mentions their benefits, but the negative ones are not desirable. In such cases, impact evaluation can help redefine the actual needs and, consequently, the objectives of policies and programs.

Sustainability belongs among the most important evaluation criteria. If the implemented program or policy is not sustainable, it will only lead to the problem appearing again and again, or solutions will raise other problems that will require further efforts. When evaluating sustainability, usually three criteria are assessed (European Commission 2004, p. 49): (i) self-sufficiency in financing to avoid persistent funding requirements. This type of sustainability can be also evaluated against the target groups' willingness to pay, where the private sector knows better what the actual needs are than pure public sector projects (including those implemented with the nonprofit organizations); (ii) systemic sustainability (sometimes referred to as political sustainability), which assesses whether changes in the system and policy system will not lead to the closure of activities, (iii) environmental sustainability, which assesses whether the implemented program and policies do not burden the environment, (iv) appropriate technology to sustain the outputs also technically, and (v) capacity to manage the outcomes.

The question on how to evaluate partnership relates to the evaluation objectives applied. The chapter does not go much into details on evaluation methods explicitly. We assume that evaluators apply a standard set of evaluation methods and techniques on how to collect data and how to analyze them. The methods applied strongly depend on the type of evaluation and data availability. Such a description would be applicable elsewhere when discussing evaluations. From this perspective, evaluation criteria specific for evaluations of partnership are crucial. Interviews of all kinds, focus groups, phone and internet-based surveys, as well as secondary data analysis belong to them. We expect that the evaluators dispose of them and can apply them appropriately according to the evaluation tasks and evaluation objectives.

A comparison of the evaluations in the above-mentioned studies shows that it is important to evaluate partnerships from all the evaluation objectives, and to apply all evaluation criteria. While this entails a complexity of problems and stakeholders' perspectives, it also allows one to give a complete picture of how the partnership works and what effects it brings. It follows the thoughts of Hodge and Greve

(2017) on the economic and political performance of partnership projects. Moreover, the current evaluation effort in partnership aims usually at the procedural aspects of creating partnerships between the public and other stakeholders in the preparation of programs and policies. These evaluations examine and describe the experience from the perspective of the various actors involved.

5. Conclusions

The contribution in this chapter tries to add to the knowledge of why and how to evaluate partnerships in SDG17. By taking examples from EU cohesion policy, we present necessary conditions for a successful implementation of partnership and various objectives for conducting evaluations, together with standard evaluation criteria. Partnership has a great potential to positively contribute to policymaking and policy implementation when it is implemented with respecting all partners and their contribution to a partnership. On the other hand, implementing a partnership requires respect for local and national habits, while a model "one size fits all" does not apply. To the question on why to evaluate a partnership, we conclude that it can maintain partnerships with positive effects and reduce negative impacts.

Concerning the question on how to evaluate partnership under the SDG17 in the future, the quality of the evaluations would benefit from the inclusion of a broader scale of evaluation objectives, including ownership and empowerment, and evaluating them by participatory approaches. Moreover, evaluations could not concentrate only on processes of establishing partnerships, but also on partnerships' efficiency, effectiveness, impacts, and sustainability. By including these aspects in the future evaluations of the partnership principle, it is possible to improve the quality of the studies, and make a substantial contribution to the implementation of the SDG17.

When evaluating partnerships, evaluators should always verify the fulfillment of the seven defining characteristics of the partnership (common goals, mutual benefits; long-term relationship; acceptance of cooperation; the contribution of each partner; synergistic effects, and joint decision-making). In addition to the common objectives of evaluation, which are mostly focused on evaluation studies (accountability and legitimacy, improvement of quality and performance, better planning and capacity building), the studies also progressed in time, to strengthen the coherence and motivation of individual actors and target groups with interventions, and started evaluating ownership and empowerment.

Changes and achievements cannot be attributed to the partnership without a proper and rigorous evaluation design. If an evaluation is more or less a monitoring exercise, we cannot confirm the positive attribution of partnerships to achieving

SDGs. Moreover, from the perspective of evaluations, the monitoring indicators under the SDG17 should be redefined, to better reflect the local cultural differences and partnerships' practices. Otherwise, SDG17 and partnership remain only a formal issue among SDGs.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Cross-Sector Partnerships for Implementing Community Climate Action Plans: Structural features, Partner Outcomes and Plan Outcomes

Krista Wong, Amelia Clarke and Eduardo Ordonez-Ponce

1. Introduction

Local governments all over the world hold an important role in climate protection as approximately 70% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are from cities (UN-Habitat 2011). Municipalities can influence emissions through their numerous roles, for example, they typically have at least partial control over land use, transportation planning, municipal buildings, and hold a key role in waste management (Deangelo and Harvey 1998; Demuzere et al. 2014). By partnering with other organizations, more progress through climate action plans can be achieved at a community-wide scale (Clarke and Ordonez-Ponce 2017; Sun et al. 2020).

A community climate action plan is a document capturing a set of strategies that local organizations have committed to carrying out for reducing GHG emissions. In Canada, there are more than 280 local governments committed to addressing climate change through membership in a program called Partners for Climate Protection Program (PCP) (FCM and ICLEI Canada n.d.). At issue is how local governments may effectively implement community climate action plans through sound structural features, and therefore enable reaching desirable outcomes (Clarke 2011). This study seeks to explore cross-sector partnerships as a means of implementing community climate action plans, both in terms of the structural features of the partnership and the resulting plan and partner outcomes.

Environmental problems, such as climate change, that are too large for any single organization to approach alone (Bryson et al. 2006; Gray and Stites 2013; Waddock 1991), are being addressed through cross-sector social partnerships (CSSPs) (Crane and Seitanidi 2014; MacDonald et al. 2018; Selsky and Parker 2005; Waddock 1991). CSSPs undergo a collaborative strategic management process, which begins with the partnership formation, a collaborative strategic plan formulation, both partner and partner-level implementation, and ends with realized outcomes, with multiple feedback loops throughout the whole process (Clarke and Fuller 2010).

Clarke and Fuller (2010) describe six types of outcomes that can result from the collaborative strategic management process. Two of the six types of outcomes that can result from a collaborative strategic management process include plan- and partner-centric outcomes (Clarke and Fuller 2010). Plan-centric outcomes are outcomes that are related to the results around which the partnership was initially created, whereas partner-centric outcomes are outcomes related to the learning and adjustments in organizational behavior or structural features of the individual partners (Clarke and Fuller 2010; Ordonez-Ponce et al. 2020).

Currently, there is a knowledge gap in the literature and practice regarding the relationship between the structural features of the cross-sector partnerships and the two types of outcomes from implementing community climate action plans (World Climate Research Programme 2019). This research seeks to fill this knowledge gap and provide new insights as a means of theoretical as well as practical contributions. Practically, this knowledge is useful to sustainability managers, sustainability practitioners, and also local government staff, as they can be informed of how implementation structures can be designed to positively contribute to addressing climate change through mitigation, and also to further comprehend the relationship of structural features and outcomes (MacDonald et al. 2018; MacDonald et al. forthcoming). Understanding structural features will be valuable as many communities have decided to focus on tackling climate change issues as a sustainable development priority (MacDonald et al. 2019). Structural features during plan implementation also affect what outcomes can be achieved (Clarke 2011).

The questions addressed through this research are: (1) What lessons from previous studies regarding the relationship between implementation structures and outcomes of collaborative community sustainability plans are transferable to the context of community climate plans? (2) What are the relationships, if any, between the partnership structural features, and plan and partner outcomes? (3) What collaborative implementation structures are present during the implementation of municipal community climate action plans in Canada; and what are the plan and partner outcomes? An overall purpose of the study is to contribute to knowledge needed for Sustainable Development Goal 17, target 17.17 which aims to "encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships" (United Nations 2015).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Climate Change and Local Governments

Many countries, including Canada, have ratified the 2015 Paris Agreement, where 189 nations have come together to prevent the global temperature from rising beyond two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels (United Nations Climate Change 2020). Local governments have significant control and influence over GHG emissions, on the scale that can contribute to a nation's international reduction targets (Bulkeley and Betsill 2005), and many mitigation efforts are under municipal jurisdiction. Bulkeley and Betsill (2005) note that local governments have a certain influence over emissions from waste production and energy consumption through processes such as energy management, transportation, planning, and waste management (Bulkeley and Betsill 2005). Addressing climate change at the scale of the city is needed since cities produce waste and consume energy (Bulkeley and Betsill 2005; Deangelo and Harvey 1998).

2.2. ICLEI and PCP Program

The Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) is a partnership between the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and ICLEI Canada—Local Governments for Sustainability, and is the Canadian component of the global Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) Campaign (FCM and ICLEI Canada n.d.). The PCP program is a five-milestone framework that guides members in (1) creating GHG emissions inventories, (2) setting reduction targets, (3) developing local action plans to reduce emissions, (4) implement policies and measures, and (5) monitor and verify results (FCM and ICLEI Canada n.d.). Steps are usually completed in order, from the first milestone to the last, but some municipalities may begin by formulating an action plan to begin reducing emissions immediately (ICLEI Canada and FCM 2008). The PCP program's milestone framework differentiates between corporate and community-wide GHG inventories and plans (ICLEI Canada and FCM n.d.). Community climate action plans make emissions reduction targets beyond emissions directly controlled by the local government, such as the business and civil society sectors (ICLEI Canada and FCM n.d.). Community-wide plans are bounded by emissions within the geographic region (Clarke and Ordonez-Ponce 2017).

Accordingly, a global survey of urban climate change experiments in 100 cities has shown that it is the local governments who have the main leading role (66% versus civil society, private sector, or other governments) in urban climate change efforts, but that other private and civil society actors also have key roles

(Castan Broto and Bulkeley 2013) as capable partners in implementing municipal climate responses (Aylett 2014). Local governments can facilitate actions by building relationships with stakeholders, boosting public participation and campaigning for this cause to national governments (Betsill and Bulkeley 2006).

2.3. Cross-Sector Social Partnerships

Cross-sector social partnerships (CSSPs) can be defined as entities created for addressing social, economic, and/or environmental issues by continually and actively engaging partners from two or more sectors (Crane and Seitanidi 2014; Selsky and Parker 2005; Waddock 1991). CSSPs require the partners' commitment of resources as well as their involvement in the planning, organizing, evaluating and implementation of activities defined as necessary for the success of the partnership (Waddock 1991). CSSPs are created when a large social problem needs to be addressed, including implementation of a collaborative strategic plan (Clarke and Fuller 2010), which community climate action plans can be categorized under as they are collaborative and cross-sector in nature.

CSSPs are growing in numbers; their foci are getting more complex, having great impact with important implications for learning, and studies from different academic disciplines are proliferating (Clarke and Crane 2018). While this condition seems expected due to its interdisciplinary characteristics (Bryson et al. 2015), it is also a main research challenge as they exist in a variety of sizes, purposes, time frames, voluntariness, and regional levels (Selsky and Parker 2005).

Waddock (1991) has identified three "ideal types" of CSSPs according to their level of problem salience and organizations' interdependence. Selsky and Parker (2005) have classified them as transactional, integrative, or developmental, based on their timeframe, level of openness, and interest orientation, offering different configurations of social partnerships. One of those configurations is composed of partners from across sectors focusing on regionally large scale projects that typically concentrate on social, economic, and/or environmental issues (Selsky and Parker 2005).

Huxham and Vangen (2000) suggest that current public sector management needs a formal understanding of the skills, processes, and structural features; tools required for working inter-organizationally. A partnership approach (collaborative approach) is a strategic management process that includes partners in plan formation, implementation, and decision making (Clarke and Erfan 2007; Clarke and Fuller 2010).

2.4. Collaborative Strategic Management Process

In the partnership approach to problem solving, collaboration entails collective decision making, and collective responsibility for actions between stakeholders (Selin and Chevez 1995; MacDonald et al. forthcoming). Instead of collaboration being a fixed, organized state, it can be seen as an ongoing process (Selin and Chevez 1995). Quite typically, collaboration processes begin with environmental antecedents, moving to problem setting, direction setting, structuring and implementation (Gray 1985), and finally, outcomes and feedback arrows illustrate the dynamic and circularity of collaboration (Selin and Chevez 1995).

With the widely applicable nature of collaboration processes, CSSPs have become evidently used in different sectors globally in at least the past two decades (Selsky and Parker 2005). However, cross-sector collaborations do not always succeed in solving all problems they set out to solve (Bryson et al. 2006; Gray and Stites 2013). There have been cases where what was meant as solutions create more problems (Bryson et al. 2006). Cross-sector collaboration is not a one-size-fits-all solution because of the complex, interconnected relationships, and changes along the progress can cause unexpected effects in the system (Bryson et al. 2006). The failure or success of a partnership depends on the types of partners and their relationships, the phases in the partnering process, the structural features of the partnership, as well as the respective environment (Glasbergen 2007). According to Waddock (1988), the potential for failure is great if the partners have not interacted before and may not understand what it means to partner or what the partnership is about. In fact, some of the reasons for partnerships to fail are the lack of commitment from the partners and gaining less than expected (Waddock 1988). On the contrary, partnerships are more likely to succeed if they focus on areas interdependent for the partners, so that they would all gain something which is larger than the costs of participating (Gray 1985; Waddock 1991), when there are leaders and sponsors, an agreement on the problem, networks exist at the moment of initial formation of the partnership, or when the partnership possesses resources and strategies for dealing with power imbalances among the partners (Bryson et al. 2006).

According to Clarke and Fuller (2010), a collaborative strategic management process consists of a context describing situational considerations for forming the partnership; a collaborative strategic plan formulation; a deliberate and emergent collaborative plan implementation by the partnership and by the partner organizations; the realized collaborative plan implementation outcomes including plan, process, partner, person, outside stakeholder, and environment-centric outcomes; and changes in the social problem domain which may impact the collaborative plan implementation process and/or outcomes.

Relating to changes to domain, but worded slightly differently, Bryson et al. (2006) also credit that many collaboration academics noticeably identify that context affects structural features, such as when government policy changes affect available resources, rearranging structural ties of partners. At all stages of the collaboration, trust, commitment, collaboration, understanding, and outcomes, are all important (Ansell and Gash 2008), as are the roles each plays (Yan et al. 2018).

2.5. Key Structural Features for Implementation through a Cross-Sector Partnership

When collaborations require sustained partner commitment, structuring is needed as a way to manage stakeholders and stakeholder interactions systematically (Selin and Chevez 1995). Structuring is a configuration of enduring and persistent activities, whose main characteristic is the regularity of roles and procedures, and of processes of interactions (Ranson et al. 1980), a dynamic process due to the complexity and uncertain nature of collaboration, where complexity derives from factors such as changes in membership, and partners (Bryson et al. 2006; Selin and Chevez 1995). The process of structuring includes formalizing partnerships, role delegation, task detailing, control system creating and monitoring (Selin and Chevez 1995). A partnership's structural features are also in part dictated by the external context (Bryson et al. 2006; Clarke and Fuller 2010), such as when government policy changes take place, affecting available resources for problem solving and restructuring the structural ties of the partners in the collaboration (Bryson et al. 2006).

Implementation structural features, understood as features that help to facilitate the implementation process, have been known to affect partner engagement and resultant outcomes (Clarke 2014). Structures are composed of processes, form(s) and partners, and many variances of structural differences can take place during implementation (Clarke and Erfan 2007). Clarke (2011, 2012) explored the question of which structural features are important for enabling plan outcomes, finding that partner engagement, partnership and partner level implementation, presence of communication system, presence of monitoring system, and collaborative oversight were important for achieving plan outcomes—findings which are applicable to implementing plans with GHG emissions and air quality goals (Clarke 2011). The study concluded that structural features are interrelated (Clarke 2011). For example, if organizations are not engaged, it would not be possible to have them implemented within their organizations; if the final goal is to achieve the plan outcomes of the community sustainability plan, it is not enough to have only one or two of these features (Clarke 2011). Table 1 shows the five structural features:

Table 1. Structural features typically included in successful implementation.

Structural Feature (Clarke 2012)	Description
Collaborative Oversight Body	The successful implementation of a community sustainability plan needs a multi-organizational party to oversee the implementation process while giving short-term directions for action, such as fund allocation and staffing assignments (Clarke 2012). This collaborative oversight body should have a secretariat to coordinate the process, a body to make decisions and oversee the implementation processes, and include members of the municipal council as well as other partner representatives (Clarke 2012).
Engagement of Key Partners	Not only do key organizations from various sectors need to be engaged, but also the right number of them, and/or there needs to be a method to perpetually add partners to the implementation process (Clarke 2012). One model of engagement is participation, where stakeholders are encouraged by the municipality to provide input to the sustainable community plan (Clarke and Erfan 2007). Another approach is the partnership model of stakeholder engagement, used for sustainable development, where stakeholders do more than provide input and actually collaborate on planning, decision making, and acting for common goals and visions (Clarke and Erfan 2007). The partnership model involves stakeholders significantly more than the participatory approach.
Community Wide Actions (Partner Actions)	With each partner implementing the collaborative strategic plan, sustainable development can happen outside of solely the governmental jurisdiction (Clarke 2012). During the implementation by individual organizations, tasks are more specific, and specific to the organization (Clarke and Fuller 2010).
Monitoring System	A monitoring system enables adjustments during the implementation stage, and for plan renewal as required (Clarke 2012). Having both progress and process reports works well (Clarke et al. 2019).
Communication System	Communication activities are useful to allow networking between partner organizations and to reach community members (Clarke 2012), with the ability of maintaining complex organizational forms, like CSSPs, and demonstrate value through collective agency (Koschmann et al. 2012).

2.6. *Outcomes of Collaborative Strategy Management Process*

Outcomes of collaboration may include benefits, impacts and programs (Selin and Chevez 1995). In the cyclical process of collaboration, outcomes are shown next to the implementation of the partners and partnership (Selin and Chevez 1995). From the six types of outcomes described by Clarke and Fuller (2010) that can result from the collaborative strategic management process, plan- and partner-centric outcomes considered in this study.

Plan-Centric Outcomes—Bryson et al. (2006) posit that the point of creating and maintaining CSSPs should be for making public value that cannot be achieved by individual organizations alone, and for creating positive social change. This ability to create greater public value and change comes from the partners' collective agency (Koschmann et al. 2012; Seitanidi et al. 2010). Plan outcomes are the background issues for why the collaboration had initially been formed and can be found in the strategic plan (Clarke and Fuller 2010). When assessing if the community is progressing in its plan outcome, the trend within each region itself is most important (Clarke 2011). For this study, plan outcomes relate to climate mitigation.

Partner-Centric Outcomes—Partner-centric outcomes are outcomes that partners experience from the collaboration (Clarke and MacDonald 2019). Much of the literature on inter-organizational learning from collaboration and the benefits that arise have been centered on business partnerships, with limited research on outcomes from private-public partnerships (Arya and Salk 2006). In CSSPs, benefits can be realized by individuals, organizations, various sectors, and by society (Selsky and Parker 2010). This article's research focuses on partner outcomes classified as physical capital: cost savings and increased capacity; human capital: knowledge or learning; and organizational capital: innovation, relationships, reputation, new markets and resources, and sustainability programs (Clarke and MacDonald 2019; Ordonez-Ponce et al. 2020).

In summary, while a fair amount is known about structural features of cross-sector social partnerships, and resulting outcomes, this article considers its application to the context of implementing community climate action plans, and also what might be learned from this context to further theoretical understanding in the cross-sector partnership literature and for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17.

3. Methods and Materials

This study uses a qualitative multi-case research design (Yin 2011). Even though case studies have been traditionally used for process evaluations, it has now been proven through application to be suitable to analyze outcomes (Yin 2011), both of which are examined by this research. The research partner engaged in data collection is ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability. As explained earlier, ICLEI Canada, in partnership with FCM, are the organizers of the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program, which is a hub for Canadian local governments that are committed to taking action to reduce GHGs (FCM and ICLEI Canada n.d.).

Selection of the case studies was based on the following criteria:

1. They are mid-sized Canadian communities involved in the PCP program (as small and mid-sized communities are under-studied in this context, and yet are the majority of communities in the PCP program. These criteria were applied by removing the top 10 Canadian cities, by population, from consideration);
2. They are members of the PCP program that have achieved milestone 5[1] in the community stream by July 2016 (as this ensures communities are monitoring progress);
3. There is a dedicated community-wide GHG action plan or energy plan, and not only part of a sustainable community plan or equivalent (as we are interested specifically in the implementation of climate action plans);
4. Their plans have considered a GHG emissions target that extends beyond 2016, and they have a current climate action plan or energy plan that is part of the PCP program, or a plan developed beyond the PCP program after achievement of Milestone 5 (as this ensures it is potentially ongoing).
5. The implementation of their plans includes 10 partners or more (as we are interested in studying cross-sector, multi-organizational partnerships);
6. They have been implementing the plan in the most recent year (as this ensures it is still active);
7. They were willing and able to provide relevant data in English for the study.

Sixteen communities met the first two criteria. These were assessed in more detail against all the criteria. The communities chosen for the multi cross-case study analysis are the District of Saanich (British Columbia), the City of Guelph (Ontario), the City of North Vancouver (British Columbia), and the City of London (Ontario) (Table 2).

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1 Milestone 5: Monitor progress and reporting results (https://fcm.ca/en/programs/partners-climate-protection/milestone-framework).

Table 2. Selected case studies.

City	Plan	Community GHG Target	Year Adopted
District of Saanich, British Columbia	*Saanich Climate Action Plan (CAP)*	33% reduction from 2007 by 2020	2010 (FCM 2015)
City of Guelph, Ontario	*Community Energy Initiative (CEI)*	Reduce energy use in buildings, industry, and transportation by 50% per capita and GHG emissions by 60% per capita by 2031, from 2006 levels (FCM 2016)	2007, entered implementation phase in 2010 (City Council Agenda n.d.)
City of North Vancouver, British Columbia	*Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP)*	Reduce emissions by 15% below 2007 levels by 2020 and 50% by 2050 (City of North Vancouver n.d.b.)	2010
City of London, Ontario	*Community Energy Action Plan (2014–2018) (CEAP)*	Reduce GHG emissions by 15% from 1990 levels by 2020; reduce 80% in total GHG emissions from 1990 levels by 2050 (Corporation of the City of London 2014)	July 2014 (Corporation of the City of London 2014; Donnelly et al. 2016)

Data collection was undertaken in collaboration with ICLEI Canada between June and October 2016, and it involved two stages: data collection for in-depth cases, and data collection for partner organizations. For stage 1, for each of the four final communities the implementation structures and plan-centric outcomes were initially collected from archival sources (websites, plans and reports) and then informants were interviewed for further details. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Skype or phone, lasted between 30 and 60 min, and were recorded and transcribed. Interview questions and how the interview was introduced can be found in Appendix A. The key informant was the municipal staff (PCP contact) responsible for implementing the community plan. This person was interviewed regarding plan information, implementation structural features, plan outcomes and partner outcomes.

Stage 2 was focused on the municipalities' partner organizations, following a procedure similar to that used in stage 1. All partner organizations were invited to participate interviewing them via telephone or Skype. Interviews lasted 15 min approximately and they were recorded and transcribed. Questions are included in Appendix B. Core implementation partners were interviewed regarding partner outcomes experienced from collaborative implementation. Core implementation partners are organizations that are involved more in implementation and/or over the longer term.

For data analysis, interview transcripts and archival material were deductively coded for the five structural features (Clarke 2011; Clarke 2012), for the partner outcomes (Clarke and MacDonald 2019), and for the plan outcomes. Then, the transcripts and archival material were inductively coded for new content. Inductive coding allows for themes to emerge from the empirical evidence. Tables were created with the reduced information for each case and inserted into case write-ups. For the partner outcomes, frequency counts for each category were determined (one count per interviewee maximum). A cross-case comparison matrix was conducted using a process-outcomes matrix (Averill 2002) to see if any patterns emerged between a partnership's structural features and the partner and plan outcomes. Cross-case conclusions were drawn. Implementation structural feature findings were compared to the literature on CSSPs and new learnings were determined. Partner outcome findings were compared to partner outcome findings from the CSSP literature to validate previous research and offer findings from the new context. Table 3 shows the number of interviews developed per type of organization.

Table 3. Interview counts and organization types.

Organization Type	Saanich	Guelph	North Vancouver	London
Government	3	1	2	1
Business	2 *	2 ˆ	1 *	1 ˆ
Business Association	0	0	0	1
Non-profit/Non-governmental organization	2	2	1	0
Total Interviews	7	5	4	3

ˆ: Denotes one common partner of Guelph and London; *: Denotes one common partner counted between Saanich and North Vancouver.

Each of four cases is introduced in this section. The PCP programs allows a number of plan types to be considered as community climate action plans, as long as the plans have GHG reduction targets. Thus, some of the cases focus on community energy plans, while others focus on community climate action plans; regardless of their name, PCP would consider these all to be community climate action plans.

3.1. District of Saanich, British Columbia: Saanich Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Plan Purpose—Embedding climate action commitment into the Official Community Plan, Saanich identified the opportunity to be an example for other local governments and simultaneously transforming the municipality into a better place to live. Additionally, the climate action plan helps reduce the community's carbon footprint and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. The plan was designed to align with the PCP program, setting reduction goals and targets for corporate and community-wide emissions, while identifying actions to meet those targets to mitigate climate change (Saanich 2010). Table 4 shows the five implementation structural features of the Saanich Climate Action Plan.

Plan Outcomes. The 2012 Community Energy and Emissions Inventory (CEEI) reports from the Province of British Columbia have not been released. There is no data beyond 2010 for community-wide GHG emissions and energy use.

Table 4. Saanich climate action plan implementation structural features.

<table>
<tr><th>Structural Feature</th><th>Related Content</th><th>Source</th></tr>
<tr><td>Engagement</td><td>Project based; ~10 "core implementation partners"</td><td>Interview</td></tr>
<tr><td>Partner Actions</td><td>Municipality shares information; when opportunity arises, discuss ideas, find projects in Saanich to interact; partner with those familiar with issue already</td><td>Interview</td></tr>
<tr><td>Collaborative Oversight</td><td>Municipal staff puts together information; create programs and report to Council annually; Sustainability Coordinator</td><td>Interview</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Communication</td><td>Climate action results communicated through Saanich Strategic Plan, and the Climate Action website, as well as through newsletters (ICLEI Canada 2013)</td><td>Document and Archival</td></tr>
<tr><td>Social media; quarterly newsletters to public; capital regional district—quarterly meetings, municipalities can share work; media events</td><td>Interview</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Monitoring</td><td>Public reports of progress are made to stakeholders (Saanich n.d.). Saanich reports to residents and Council through "Annual and Financial Reporting", reports to the province through the "CARIP" (Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program), and reports internationally through the "Carbon Climate Registry" (Saanich n.d.).</td><td>Document and archival</td></tr>
<tr><td>Annual reporting part of whole organization; CARIP reporting; 2012 CEEI (Community Energy and Emissions Inventory) report not officially launched; will create own estimates</td><td>Interview</td></tr>
</table>

3.2. City of Guelph, Ontario: Community Energy Initiative (CEI)

In 2006, the Consortium decided to formalize a long-term Community Energy Plan (CEP) which would guide the city's energy future for years to come (Garforth International llc 2007). The name of the plan changed from CEP to the current Community Energy Initiative (CEI), reflecting its entrance into the implementation phase (City Council Agenda n.d.). Guelph's goals under the plan are to use less energy in 25 years than they do today, consume less energy per capita than comparable Canadian cities, and produce less GHG per capita than the current global average (City Council Agenda 2016b).

Plan Purpose: Guelph has a population of 140,000 people including an additional of 20,000 students during the school year (City Council Agenda 2016d), and is situated in a region near enough to Toronto that it attracts population growth (Garforth International llc 2007). Guelph's population is expected to grow to 170,000 within the city by 2031 (City Council Agenda 2016d), supported by commercial and industrial development activities. This translates to an addition of homes plus industrial growth. The City has committed to implementing an energy plan that can support the population growth and help with competitiveness and environmental performance (Garforth International llc 2007). Table 5 shows the five implementation structural features of Guelph's Community Energy Initiative.

CEI Update: An upcoming CEI update was expected to be provided to Council in Spring 2017, with progress reports given to Council regularly (City Council Agenda 2016c). Of the three main scopes, two are closely related to this study. One is to re-focus the CEI as a community-led initiative, by empowering stakeholders to decide on the priorities and lead initiatives, and another, to develop progress metrics and compare to other municipalities by coordinating reporting protocols (City Council Agenda 2016c). Some closely relevant principles of a CEI update include, "Community-based governance, oversight and reporting; improved community engagement with local stakeholders; clarity on the role of the Local Government, Agencies and stakeholders; partnering with external third party advocacy and support groups; rigorous analysis, reporting and oversight in support of developing acceptable baseline targets and communicating measurable results" (City Council Agenda 2016a, p. 149).

Plan Outcomes: The CEI was adopted in 2007. From 2006–2012, energy usage has decreased 17.6% per capita, and GHG emissions decreased by 26.3% per capita since 2006, while the total population increase was 21.7% (Guelph Hydro Inc. 2013). A staff report mentions, "Energy and Emission per capita fell in early stages but remained stalled" (City Council Agenda 2016a, p. 117). GHGs and energy use per capita have been "roughly at the same level" (City Council Agenda 2016a, p. 140) since 2009. A decrease in fossil fuel based electricity supplied to Guelph contributed the early decreases while the stabled indicators are the result of ongoing overall improvements in efficiency offset by growth (City Council Agenda 2016a). Currently, an update of the CEI is in progress at the time of study.

Table 5. Community energy initiative implementation structural features.

Structural Feature	Plan	Source
Engagement	Informal engagement; ad-hoc; task force ended 2012; will be recruiting for a task force; ~6 "core implementation partners"	Interview
Partner Actions	Defining the role of local governments in CEI update; The city provides leadership and planning; major project—district energy system involved utility, local customers, development community, public input; Major project—energy efficiency retrofit strategy	Interview
Collaborative Oversight	Municipal oversight; Future task force—oversight role; Manager, Community Energy	Interview
Communication	Webpage; social media; CEI update to Council results in communication to community; council meetings publicly presented and activities related to CEI results in communication and outreach	Interview
Monitoring	To monitor progress towards targets an *Energy and Emissions Monitoring Report* is prepared every year by The City of Guelph, assisted by Guelph Hydro Inc. (Guelph Hydro Inc. 2013). Currently refreshing Community Energy Initiative; Future task force– monitoring role; reports on website; update to 2015—unpublished	Document and Archival Interview

3.3. City of North Vancouver, British Columbia: Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP)

Plan Purpose: The City of North Vancouver has relatively low per capita emissions, the CEEP is fundamentally about deepening actions around land use, development, waste management and other activities to deepen emissions reductions (HB Lanarc 2010). The CEEP is also the analysis document to support the Amendment of the Official Community Plan (OCP) in order for North Vancouver to comply with the Local Government Act which requires local governments to have GHG reduction targets, policies and actions (HB Lanarc 2010).

The Community Energy and Emissions Plan's objectives are to "develop a climate and energy vision that supports core City priorities; develop a high level framework that builds on and guides existing City activity, with new sector-specific policies and actions; estimate the near-term costs of climate and energy-related policies and actions; develop defensible and meaningful greenhouse gas reduction target(s)" (HB Lanarc 2010, p. 5). Table 6 presents the five implementation structural features of North Vancouver's Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Table 6. Community energy and emissions plan implementation structural features.

Structural Feature	Plan	Source
Engagement	No formalized structural feature; ~5 "core implementation partners"; known organizations added as appropriate	Interview
Partner Actions	City collaborates with organizations to implement programs	Interview
Collaborative Oversight	Council is the decision-making body; staff committee reviews progress; Section Manager, Environmental Sustainability	Interview
Communication	Meetings; emails; no formal network	Interview
	Webpage; CARIP (Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program) reporting (City of North Vancouver n.d.a.)	
Monitoring	Council and staff committee monitors progress of plan; meetings to review progress of implementation and provides update to Council; partners—roundtable sharing of work; monitors emissions (transportation); make adjustments as progress; 2020—due for renewal; no data past 2010 (CEEI); look at programs being implemented; working on data for inventory	Interview

Plan Outcomes: There is no data beyond 2010 for community-wide GHG emissions and energy use due to a delay in the CEEI reports. However, the City is looking at programs being implemented and measuring available emissions (transportation). Overall, North Vancouver's implementation of the Community Energy and Emissions Plan involves all five implementation structural features, and partner outcomes of each capital type were found. However, monitoring for community-wide GHG emissions and energy is not at a frequency which allows for recent community-wide energy and emissions to be known. This occurs because the CEEI is delayed.

3.4. City of London, Ontario: Community Energy Action Plan (2014–2018) (CEAP)

Overall Goals of the London Energy Connections Program:

- "Increase the local economic benefit of sustainable energy use through" cost savings from energy conservation and energy efficiency, revenue from local production of clean and green energy products, and job creation associated with product and service providers engaged in these activities (Corporation of the City of London 2014, p. 6).
- Reduce the environmental impact associated with energy use, through GHG reduction targets consistent with the Province of Ontario's goals, namely: 15% reduction from 1990 levels by 2020, 37% reduction from 1990 levels by 2030, and 80% reduction from 1990 levels by 2050 (City of London 2019).

Plan Purpose: The plan's goal is for the City to meet the provincial GHG targets using ways that generate financial payback or at minimum financially break even within a 10-year time frame (Corporation of the City of London 2014). In the past 15 years, the City has been concerned with energy use mainly for environmental reasons (Donnelly et al. 2016). The residents of London have been contributing to smog-forming emissions, mainly from fossil fuel energy use (Donnelly et al. 2016). As prices for energy increase, the community is becoming more aware of the financial costs of energy consumption, leading many people to become aware of their own consumption and seeking ways to conserve energy (Donnelly et al. 2016). Table 7 shows the five implementation structural features of the Community Energy Action Plan.

Table 7. Community energy action plan implementation structural features.

Structural Feature	Plan	Source
Engagement	Identify the "influencers" in the community (individuals, organizations, neighborhoods etc.), and develop engagement and enlisting strategies (Donnelly et al. 2016); ~22 key stakeholders in action plan elements (Corporation of the City of London 2014); local businesses, local institutions and the local community are key community energy stakeholders (Corporation of the City of London 2014); "explore interest bringing Sustainability CoLab's 'Regional Carbon Initiative' concept" to the city (Donnelly et al. 2016, p. 14).	Document and Archival
	Reach Londoners through community associations and employers; Ad-hoc relationships, work with stakeholders on specific activities; key stakeholders' activities are in the plan; there are stakeholders who committed to action for inclusion in plan	Interview

Table 7. *Cont.*

Structural Feature	Plan	Source
Partner Actions	Role in playing "connect the dots" between key community stakeholders, their activities, and roles stakeholders can have in the CEAP (Donnelly et al. 2016) City staff participated in steering committee that established the London Environmental Network, including groups with an energy focus (Donnelly et al. 2016) City staff are influencers through Active and Green Communities (Donnelly et al. 2016) City staff co-hosted the "Corporate Leadership for a Greener London" business engagement event with Labatt Brewery (Donnelly et al. 2016)	Document and Archival
Collaborative Oversight	Municipal staff oversees plan progress, reports back to community and Council; Manager, Air Quality	Interview
Communication	In public education materials, easily comprehensible infographics are used, and are well received (Donnelly et al. 2016) Ongoing conversations, implementation and collaborations an essential component of the London Energy Connections Program (Donnelly et al. 2016)	Document and Archival
	'Reduce Impact' website, encourage Londoners and stakeholders to post projects	Interview
Monitoring	London Hydro and Union Gas provided utility data between 2011–15 (Donnelly et al. 2016) Annual Community and GHG Emissions Inventory reports for 2013, 2014, and 2015 (Donnelly et al. 2016) The CEAP is a dynamic document, when actions are added from new opportunities, it will be included in progress reports (Corporation of the City of London 2014) Publish reports on city-led plan actions annually (Corporation of the City of London 2014). Some stakeholders provided information about their own actions for the plan, and it is proposed a next step is to contact stakeholders that provided information about their actions for the plan for an update of partner actions (Donnelly et al. 2016)	Document and Archival
	Future plans to reach out to stakeholders (that provided information for action) for updates; London Energy Connections Program— An ongoing program for developing, implementing and tracking the current Community Energy Action Plan and subsequent plans	Interview

Plan Outcomes 2015:

- Total community energy use in 2015 was 16% above 1990 levels (City of London 2016), down from 18% above 1990 levels in 2014 (City of London 2015) but is below "business as usual" forecast in 1990, demonstrating impact of recent energy conservation activities (City of London 2016);
- Per capita energy use in 2015 was 6% below 1990 levels (City of London 2016), compared with 4% below 1990 levels in 2014 (City of London 2015). Biggest improvement in residential energy use per capita, attributing to energy efficient appliances, retrofits and new home construction (City of London 2016);
- Total GHGs in 2015 were 8% lower than 1990 levels (City of London 2016), compared with 6% below 1990 levels in 2014 (City of London 2015);
- Per capita GHG emissions in 2015 was 25% lower than 1990 levels (City of London 2016) compared with 24% lower than 1990 levels in 1990 (City of London 2015).

Examples of Plan Outcomes Context:

- Cold winter of 2015 influenced space heating and process heating needs for industrial, commercial and institutional buildings (City of London 2016);
- 6% energy use in 2015 from 1990 levels related to industrial, commercial and institution sector partially due to aftermath of the 2008–2009 recession, but efforts have been increased by local utilities to promote energy conservation and demand management (City of London 2016);
- Cold winter of 2014 increased demand for natural gas which was reflected in energy use especially residential sector, but there were still improvements in residential sector possibly due to energy efficiency of consumer appliances, home retrofits, space heating and cooling systems and new home construction (City of London 2016). Residential energy per capita 5% lower than 1990 in 2014 (City of London 2015) compared with 13% lower in 2015 (City of London 2016).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Cross-Case Comparisons

Table 8 summarizes the presence of the five implementation structural features and plan outcomes, and Table 9 presents partner outcomes across the four communities.

Table 8. Cross case comparison of implementation structural features and plan outcomes.

Implementation Structural Feature	Saanich	Guelph	North Vancouver	London
Engagement	Present	Present	Present	Present
Partner Action	Present	Present	Present	Present
Collaborative oversight	Municipality oversees	Municipal oversight, upcoming task force	Municipality oversees	Municipality oversees, exploring partnership approach
Communication	Present	Present	Present	Present
Monitoring	Present, but community energy and emissions delayed	Present	Present, but community energy and emissions delayed	Present
Plan Outcomes (GHG and Energy)	Recent community GHG and Energy undetermined	Community GHG and energy use decreased per capita from 2006 to 2012, decreased in early stages, and stalled	Recent community GHG and Energy undetermined	2015: per capita energy below 1990 levels and total energy above 1990 levels 2015: total and per capita GHGs lower than 1990 levels, decreased from 2014

Table 9. Partner outcomes across municipalities.

Capital Type	Resources Gained	Reduction	Count
Human Capital	Inductive—Moral Support	Provide guidance, motivation; comfort not on own; verifies on the right track	3
	Knowledge and Learning	Partners are specialists; increase understanding, awareness; input into best practices; more opinions, options; creating awareness of programs, opportunities and barriers; experience and knowledge shared	6
	Accessed Marketing Opportunities	Bring awareness to program; larger audience reach from outreach channels; Access to markets	3
	Increased Impact on Community Sustainability	Progress made with organizations; motivating people for mitigating climate change; accelerating to low carbon economy x 2; achieve mission and vision; better solution for community; opportunity to benefit the residents—double incentives; reduce GHG emissions through communities x 2; drive energy efficiency; helping advance projects; successful on mitigation work; plan continuation; availability and adoption of electric vehicles in region; leveraging strengths of partners	15

Table 9. *Cont.*

Capital Type	Resources Gained	Reduction	Count
Organizational Capital	Accessed Business Opportunities	Funding; grant	2
	Influence	Increase support; common voice to provincial government; influence; ensure support	4
	Innovation	Awareness and ideas—innovation	2
	New Resources	Local governments have tools	1
	Relationships	Relationship building; strengthened relationships with provincial government; bring together business and community; introduced to stakeholders; connect community together; building stronger relationships; access to relationships	7
	Reputation	Seen as leaders; benefit to reputation; reputation improved; identify community doing interesting things; preferred organization for advisory groups	6
	Sustainability Programs	Project implementation; creating programs; launching program; expand programs	4
Physical Capital	Increased Capacity	Additional funding; pool resources to do projects	2

4.2. Implementation Structural Features

In all the municipalities, communication systems, individual partner organizations implementing actions, and key partner engagement were present, validating the collaborative strategic management literature (e.g., Clarke 2011; Selin and Chevez 1995). The empirical and literature differences are related to oversight, and to the monitoring structural features. Currently, it is the municipalities who are entirely responsible for the oversight of the community plan, thus there are no collaborative oversight entities, which Clarke (2011) identified as an important structural feature for partnerships. However, Guelph's plan is undergoing an update where a principle for the update is "Community-based governance, oversight and reporting; improved community engagement with local stakeholders" (City Council Agenda 2016a, p. 149).

Guelph's Community Energy Initiative in 2010 had engaged stakeholders on a Task Force, but the mandate expired in 2012 (City Council Agenda 2016a). The terms of reference for the upcoming Task Force states that the Task Force is for providing "a forum for community-based stakeholder guidance, oversight and reporting to the community and to Council during the update of the Community Energy Initiative" (City Council Agenda n.d., p. 1). Collaborative governance is useful for connecting cross-sector stakeholders together, giving them a chance to interact (Ansell and Gash 2008). Guelph is putting this structural feature in place in comparison with other case communities because one of the plan's scope is to focus the plan as a community-led initiative (City Council Agenda 2016c). Even with collaborative governance, local authorities have a key role in coordinating partner actions and getting the community involved with policy programs (Aylett 2014; Betsill and Bulkeley 2006; Castan Broto and Bulkeley 2013).

In terms of monitoring, all of the cases have monitoring structural features that include reporting and opportunities for renewal. However, monitoring of GHG and energy use in both British Columbia-based municipalities (Saanich and North Vancouver) are delayed due to delays in the provincial reporting. In these cases, instead of the local government or partnership undertaking the reporting, it is undertaken by the province (i.e., state-level government). This raises the question regarding to what extent an implementation structural feature should be in place, and which entity should be responsible for it.

What was also found was that for partner engagement, core partners are engaged on an ad-hoc, and activities bases, similar to partner engagement for climate adaptation, partners were also found to be engaged on an ad-hoc basis (Hughes 2015). As this was generally similar across the municipalities, this may be a context-specific characteristic of the engagement structural feature, rather than the size of the partnerships. Yet, local sustainability partnerships can reach 800+ partners (Clarke and Ordonez-Ponce 2017), so it seems Canadian municipalities are under-utilizing this collective action opportunity.

4.3. Plan and Partner Outcomes

For plan outcomes of the municipalities, looking at GHG and energy targets, both North Vancouver and Saanich have uncertain GHG and energy outcomes due to delays in monitoring and reporting. Both Ontario municipalities (Guelph and London) have had an overall decrease of GHG levels and energy use since the adoption of the plans studied. However, even though Guelph's plan outcomes have leveled off, its key informant provided an important reminder that outcomes for long-term strategic plans may not be linear, and that methodologies for assessment may also be a consideration. For example, emissions calculations for transportation can be derived from calculating fuel consumed citywide, while kilometers travelled for vehicles may also be used (The World Bank 2011). Similarly, London's reports provide important insight into the external factors that can influence energy use and GHG emissions including seasonal climates, population change, economic factors, and provincial energy decisions. Overall, these municipalities may be considered to be quite successful as they have achieved milestone 5 of the PCP program in the community stream. Equally important, these municipalities continue to implement and have programs ongoing to mitigate climate change, renewing plans even after having achieved milestone 5. That said, these communities are likely not on track for their longer-term deep decarbonization targets unless they revise their approach. This raises questions about partnerships failing (e.g., Bryson et al. 2006), and what factors might be responsible for that failure. Is it external factors, such as the leadership from other levels of government (Glasbergen 2007; Gray and Stites 2013), or will a renewal of the partnership structure and implementation efforts (Clarke 2014) enable success?

Partner outcomes were collected from core implementation partner organizations, and it was found that they are identical to the previous sustainable community plan findings in the capital types and resources gained (Clarke and MacDonald 2019). A new partner outcome captured in two instances may be grouped together as moral support, as part of human capital. Collaborative implementation can provide guidance, motivation and verification of efforts. This new partner outcome finding—which is different from the context of community sustainability plans—may be because the partnerships created for community-wide climate and energy purposes are relatively newer. Comparatively, not many communities have reached milestone 5 of the PCP program in the community stream, and the communities studied are leaders in this regard. Therefore, it may be for these reasons that moral support in this emerging space was discovered as a partner outcome from collaboration. Two outcomes, in relation to those elaborated by Clarke and MacDonald (2019), were not found in this context—increased capacity due to a new engagement mechanism and cost savings. This may be due, in general, to the size of the partnerships and/or the partners' functions.

4.4. Implementation Partners

Another important discussion is the concept of implementation partners. This study began with the definition of implementation partners as organizations that are implementing or helping to implement the plan. However, using this broad notion, there was some difficulty in quantifying the number of implementation partners in some interviews, as results show the partnerships are not yet formal entities in this context. Core implementation partners tend to be organizations that are involved more in implementation and/or over the longer term, which in this context will include the natural gas utilities. These core implementation partners were the organizations that were engaged in the interviews of this research. It is important for core implementation partners to be identified, engaged and have positive relationships to be sustained for the long-term implementation (Ansell and Gash 2008; Waddock 1988) of GHG and energy plans. A key concept to revisit is key partners which are major users, and emitters of GHG and energy (such as natural gas utilities). Ideally, key partners are engaged as core implementation partners with a commitment to decarbonization. This challenge seems to be implicitly reflected in the literature, since a scan of the literature does not seem to reveal a definition of partners which must specifically be for implementation, for social problems of this nature (sustainability/climate change), therefore making quantification difficult, especially since a broader sense was used. It is important to distinguish implementation partners since, for example, in climate adaptation planning, partnerships for the planning phase do not always carry through to the implementation phase (Hughes 2015) and new partners can be added in the implementation phase (Clarke 2014).

4.5. Relationship between Structural Features and Plan Outcomes

CSSPs create public value, beyond what is possible from a single organization (Bryson et al. 2006; Gray and Stites 2013; Waddock 1991). Overall, for the relationship between structural features and plan outcomes, it is that partnership structural features during plan implementation are important for enabling the achievement of plan outcomes (GHG emissions and energy use). The structural features are interrelated and inherently, if individual partners do not take action within their own organizations, there would be less progress (Clarke 2011). Ideally, completing these actions and making progress, will help a community to reach its ultimate plan goals of GHG and energy use reduction that can also bring along to the community a wide range of benefits.

Revisiting Saanich and North Vancouver in the cross-case comparison table (Table 7), it can be seen that the "absence" of a structural feature affects the plan outcome, specifically for the implementation structural feature of monitoring to make plan outcomes uncertain in these municipalities. At the same time, the presence of all the implementation structural features (i.e., London and Guelph) helps to show that these implementation structural features are important for enabling the achievement of plan outcomes. From the patterns shown in a cross-case presentation of the case studies, where these five implementation structural features (Clarke 2012) are present for the implementation of the plan, then plan outcomes are in the direction that is desired for achieving plan goals. Both Guelph and London have an overall decrease of GHG levels and energy use since the adoption of the plans studied. The context of climate and economy are also influencers of GHG and energy usage levels, which is consistent with the literature (Glasbergen 2007; Selin and Chevez 1995; The World Bank 2011). In addition to the GHG and energy decrease, it is evident that collaborative implementation has led to an increase in community sustainability as mentioned by interviewees and captured as part of partner outcomes. Partner action and partner engagement are particularly essential to have achieved community-wide impacts.

As contextual factors influence GHG emissions and energy use, it needs to be considered and it may be beneficial to explore project-level impacts of the plan (such as project-level quantification of GHG reductions) to complement the information found in an overall community inventory for assessing interventions, since community-wide inventories capture both interventions and contextual factors. As mentioned in London's 2015 Community Energy and GHG Inventory, "Whether emissions continue to decrease depends upon the impact of energy and fuel conservation efforts, Ontario's upcoming Climate Change Action Plan, climate trends, economic growth, and consumer choices" (City of London 2016, p. iv).

4.6. Relationship between Structural Features and Partner Outcomes

In CSSPs, benefits can be experienced by individuals, organizations, various sectors and by society (Clarke and Fuller 2010; Selsky and Parker 2010; van Tulder et al. 2016). Generally, partnership design, including structural features, determine value generation for partners (Austin and Seitanidi 2012; Clarke 2014). For partner outcomes, when organizations are involved as core partners, benefits are expected to be experienced by the partners (Clarke and MacDonald 2019). The relationship between implementation structural features and partner outcomes validates the literature. While it is partnership design in general that can determine value for the partners, for the partner outcomes (Austin and Seitanidi 2012; Clarke 2014), partner action, partner engagement, and communication may be particularly important structural features to enable this. Through partner taking actions, they are enabled to experience partner outcomes. For example, partner outcomes such as increasing community sustainability, increasing capacity, and gaining reputation would not be enabled if organizations did not act. Partners also need to be engaged, for example to enable partner outcomes such as influence and relationships (Ansell and Gash 2008; Waddock 1988). Further, communication activities are useful for commending progress, engaging partners and disseminating best practices (Clarke 2012), which helps to achieve outcomes such as knowledge and learning and relationships. All structural features are interrelated (Clarke 2011) and it is likely that partnership design as a whole that determines partner outcomes.

5. Conclusions

The first research question is about the applicability of research done on collaborative community sustainability partnerships to the context of community climate action plans. Overall, this study helps to show that the five implementation structural features (Clarke 2011; Clarke 2012) are important for helping to achieve plan outcomes and partner outcomes in the context of local climate action. The majority of partner outcomes were also validated, with one new addition and two not found in this context. Specifically, it was found that partners can experience moral support as a human capital outcome from collaborative implementation, an outcome that is unique when compared with partner outcomes from implementing community sustainability plans (Clarke and MacDonald 2019).

The second research question is about the relationships between partnership structural features and plan and partner outcomes. This was discussed in Sections 4.5 and 4.6, where the findings indicate that relationships are likely present in these cases. Further studies are needed to validate this with a large statistical analysis.

The third research question is about what collaborative structures, plan outcomes and partner outcomes are present. This empirical question is best seen in Tables 8 and 9. These are discussed in Sections 4.2 and 4.3. These findings provide insights to those interested in climate mitigation and designing partnerships.

Additionally, conducting the study showed the need for better clarity on defining partners, which is discussed in Section 4.4. Thus, this chapter also explores the concept of core implementation partners and the possibility of various formality of partners during the implementation of collaborative sustainability strategies. Core implementation partners are organizations that tend to be involved more in implementation and/or over the longer term, which in this context includes utilities.

One limitation of this research is that it uses qualitative techniques when examining relationships. However, this study benefitted from an analysis that was based on interviewing knowledgeable informants, sound theory, as well as documents and archival data that contained a wealth of information. Now that the variables have been validated and improved through this qualitative work, a larger quantitative study could be conducted to consider the relationships more accurately. Another limitation is that it is unsure whether all partner outcomes are applicable to all municipalities outside of those studied. This is, in part, due to the small number of partners interviewed, and as there are varying ratios in the mix of types of partners in each sector in different municipalities. Further, another limitation is that it is unknown how completely transferable learnings from this research may be to municipalities outside of those in either British Columbia or Ontario with comparable or less population size, and different regional contexts. These research design limitations offer opportunities for future research directions.

Future research could ask the question of the extent implementation structural features should be in place. This question of extent stems from the monitoring structural feature studied in this research. In two municipalities, monitoring energy and emissions through the province is present, but it has not been released for some time. In addition, implementation partners, or levels of, need to be defined for social partnerships. If a quantitative version of this study were to be conducted, project-level quantification of GHGs could be explored to complement the information with an overall community inventory, since community-wide inventories capture both interventions and contextual factors.

For SDG 17, this study shows the importance of cross-sector partnerships at the local scale, and not just at the international scale. Localizing the SDGs and local action is critical for global progress on most of the Global Goals (MacDonald et al. 2018). Cross-sector partnerships will be an important mechanism to achieve progress at the local level, so it is useful to consider target 17.17 at this scale. For climate mitigation in particular, it is clear that cross-sector partnerships will need to be well designed to support communities to achieve the newer, more ambitious goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 (IPCC 2018).

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.C.; Methodology, A.C. and K.W.; Data Collection and Analysis, K.W.; Writing—Original Draft Preparation, K.W.; Writing—Review and Editing, E.O.-P. and A.C.; Supervision, A.C.; Project Administration, A.C.; Funding Acquisition, A.C. and K.W.

Funding: This research was funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada Insight Grant 435-2014-1250 and Mitacs grant IT07784.

Acknowledgments: Special thanks to the cities and partners that participated in this study. Also thanks to Megan Meaney and ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability who contributed to the research design and supported the related Mitacs internship. Lei Huang, M. May Seitanidi, and Mark Roseland contributed to the research design of the larger project, led by Amelia Clarke. This paper is one study within a much larger project.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funding sponsors had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, and in the decision to publish the results.

Appendix A. Municipal Informant Interview Guide

Introduction[2]

Read: The purpose of this research is to provide insights into designing cross-sector partnerships effective for achieving community-wide GHG emissions targets by examining implementation structures and outcomes in community climate action plans. Through this interview I hope to learn more about your community climate action plan implementation structures, as well as plan and partner outcomes. Some questions will have additional information beside it, such as definitions and examples.

Read: Do you have any questions before we begin?

Note in case of more info requested: Key structural features for implementation of a plan are structures in place that help to facilitate the implementation of a plan. For example, communication systems, partner engagement and attraction mechanisms, collaborative oversight arrangements, monitoring systems, and individual partner actions.

Interview Questions

Q1: What is your role or position in the climate action plan?
Q2: When was the community-wide climate action plan adopted? Began implementation?
Q3: How many partners are taking part in the implementation phase of the community-wide climate action plan, either implementing or helping to implement?
(More info: Partners are anyone or organization who is helping to implement the community plan. Partners can be found in various sectors such as NGOs, regional governments, electric utility, schools, school boards, gas utility, higher education institutions, business improvement areas, citizen groups, financial institutions, large companies, conservation authorities etc.)
Q4: Can you provide a list of the partners who are implementing your community's climate action plan at the end of this interview?
Q5: Does your plan engage key organizations from different sectors and have a way to identify and add them?
If so, how?
(ex. engaged as formal/ informal partners, task forces, partner committees etc.)
Q6: Does the plan have a collaborative oversight body to oversee implementation and for decision making?
Who is involved in the collaborative oversight?

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[2] The interview guide is attached, showing script and questions presented to the interviewees.

More info: Collaborative arrangement in place to oversee strategy formulation and implementation. (for example, committee or board, or staff coordinator, an NGO that oversees this? A decision making body? Etc.)
Q7: Do the individual partner organizations implement within their own organizations?
(ex. partners delegated tasks, partners voluntarily commit to actions within organization aligning with plan etc.)
Q8: Are there examples of joint implementation efforts by the partnership as a whole?
Q9: What communication system is used to allow communication to, and between partners relating to the plan?
More info: Communication—A communication system to maintain networking and knowledge sharing (ex. to reach citizens, to network? Partners provide updates annually, a communications plan, e-mails, galas, newsletters, secretariat manages website etc.)
Q10: What are the monitoring processes in place?
More info: allows progress to be assessed, adjustments made, plan renewal (ex. partners provide progress reports, secretariat monitors, committee decides on renewal etc.)
Q11: How does the current monitoring system allow for progress assessment, plan adjustment and plan renewal?
Q12: What progress has been made towards the emissions reductions target?
Q13: What collaborative actions have been implemented by the municipality?
(ex. coordinate tasks, provide community-wide budget, leading tasks and initiatives etc.)
Q14: What has been the experience (ex. benefits or disadvantages) to the municipality from collaborative implementation with partners?
More info: Partner outcomes are outcomes that partners experience from the collaboration. (Ex. improved networking and learning, improved reputation, community cohesiveness, progress towards goals, financial savings, relationships etc.)
Q15: Would there be another person in your organization who may have a perspective on this?
Q16: Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix B. Partner Interview Guide

Introduction

Read: The purpose of this research is to provide insights into designing cross-sector partnerships effective for achieving community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions targets. One main component is examining outcomes that partners experience as a result of acting to help decrease GHGs. Through this interview I hope to learn more about your organization's actions and outcomes as it relates to contributing to progressing towards GHG emissions targets in the municipality. Some questions will have additional information beside it, such as definitions and examples.

Read: Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview Questions

Q1: What is your role as it relates to the climate action plan?
Q2: Has your organization been implementing?
Q3: If so, what is your organization doing and/or has accomplished?
Q4: What have been the outcomes to the organization as a result of the implementation?
More information: Partner outcomes are outcomes that partners experience from the collaboration. (Ex. benefits, disadvantages, improved networking and learning, improved reputation, financial savings, etc.)
Q5: Do you have any questions for me?

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ISBN 978-3-03897-882-4