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Development of Multisector Alliances (MSAs): Organization and Leadership

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ABOUT THE RESEARCH & CASE STUDIES

The Successful Business Participation in Global Governance Networks (GGN) Research Project aims to develop a better understanding of Global Governance Networks (GNNs) and the keys to their success.

The research team reviewed numerous several multi- sectoral entities and identified nine GGNs that became the subject of our case studies. The research team conducted semi-structured interviews with executives and staff from each of these GNNs and prepared a profile, including a description of the unique evolution of the organization, goals and objectives, organizational structure and governance arrangements for each GGN. The following list provides an overview of the nine GGNs profiled:

1. **Every Woman Every Child** is an unprecedented global effort that mobilizes and amplifies action by governments, multilaterals, the private sector, research centers, academia and civil society to address life-threatening health challenges facing women and children globally.

2. **HERproject** catalyzes global partnerships and local Networks to improve female workers' general and reproductive health in eight emerging economies.

3. **R4 Rural Resilience Initiative** is a cutting-edge, strategic, large-scale partnership between the public and private sectors to innovate and develop better tools to help the world's most vulnerable people build resilient livelihoods.

4. **Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative** is a coalition of governments, companies, civil society groups, investors and international organizations that aims to improve transparency and accountability in the extractives sector.

5. **Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases** works with international partners at the highest level of government, business and society to break down the logistical and financial barriers to delivering existing treatments for the seven most common neglected tropical diseases.

6. **Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition** is an alliance that supports public-private partnerships to increase access to the missing nutrients in diets necessary for people, communities and economies to be stronger and healthier.

7. **Inter-Agency Network For Education in Emergencies** is a global Network of individuals and representatives from NGOs, United Nations and donor agencies, governments, academic institutions, schools and affected populations working to ensure all persons have the right to a quality and safe education in emergencies and post- crisis recovery.

8. **mHealth Alliance** works with diverse partners to advance mobile-based or mobile-enhanced solutions that deliver health through research, advocacy, support for the development of interoperable solutions and sustainable deployment models.

9. **The Rainforest Alliance** is a global non-profit that focuses on environmental conservation and sustainable development and works through collaborative partnerships with various stakeholders.

Understanding Global Governance Networks

The level of interest in multi-sectoral collaboration and governance networks has increased tremendously in recent years. Such arrangements are referred to by a variety of names, including: multi- stakeholder alliances, multi-sectoral governance, trans-sectoral governance, public private-partnerships, and mega-communities. Although these terms all share a similar idea about the form of collaboration that is taking place, the differences between these various entities – what they do, how they do it, their impact, and how their activities are judged and justified -- can be profound.

Global Governance Networks are distinctive hybrid entities on the global governance landscape. Some have been in operation for several years – such as Rainforest Alliance launched in 1986, (created by the organizers of a conference on rainforest destruction); and, Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) -- launched in September 2002, (created at the World Summit on Sustainable Development). But many GGNs have been formed more recently.

The GGNs in this study are distinguished by sharing several characteristics. The individual characteristics of GGNs themselves may not be unique, but it is their combination that sets them apart from other multi-sector collaborations:

1. Multi-sector partners: the partners should represent a properly diverse set of interests relevant to the issue(s) being addressed and they should have standing within their

respective communities.

2. Vision of change that addresses an important global social problem.

3. Involved in actions and their implementation, supported by a logic model on how specific actions will bring about the desired results and whose impact is clearly defined and measurable.

4. Self-directed: the mission and goal(s) are membership-driven not directed by government authority.

The combination of these attributes and ambitions places GGNs in the unique role of bridging a *Global Governance Gap*: the growing ineffectiveness of governments when they act exclusively to address growing global challenges. Literally, scores of thousands of multisector collaborations have been formed to address global issues, many utilizing the internet and social media to engage people and communities. But their most common focus is to work on: formulating new global policies; raising awareness of global problems; advocating for specific government actions or voluntary guidelines and standards; or providing information. GGNs do governance: sometimes complementing, sometimes substituting for, those actions that have been the traditional prerogative of governments.

If GGNs are understood to be bridging a global governance gap, there activities are fairly seen as occupying public policy space. What they do, how they do it, and their impact is an important matter to be judged and justified. When GGNs are carrying-out, in essence, 'governance without government' they should be subject to public scrutiny and it is critical to understand which GGNs are advancing the public interest.

Issues of Organization and Leadership

Although research in this field is growing, many questions about who GGNs are, what they do, and how they do it have not been addressed. The case studies provide valuable descriptive information on GGNs and introduce this emergent form of global governance to many who may not be familiar with GGNs, or may not even be aware that they exist. This Working Paper focuses on one aspect of GGNs: the organizational and leadership issues of GGNs in their formation and their operations.

One issue on which all interviewees agreed was that the organization and leadership of GGNs is a challenging undertaking, and not for the faint-of-heart. While the idea of bringing together multiple stakeholder groups – multilateral institutions, governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations, and civil society – so they can collaborate on solving important global problems sounds compelling 'in theory' – bringing together such diverse groups with such diverse interests and 'cultures', in practice, takes a lot of work, patience, and persistence. Without an unwavering passion and commitment to "the cause" that is the spark for the formation of GGNs, this innovative and promising approach to good global governance would not be sustainable.

The Working Paper addresses issues of organization and leadership that were shared by the GGNs in the study. Numerous important findings about organization and leadership issues that are critical to the success of GGNs were discovered. We highlight a few of these findings below.

HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY FINDINGS

I.   Unflagging Leadership

Two specific GGN leadership roles stand out more distinctly than others - the Catalyst and the Synergist.   Sometimes these roles are played by the same person, and other times they have been played by partners at different times.

Catalysts play a key role in the initial stages, as they are responsible for brokering many of the partnerships that serve as the foundation for the GGN.   Often the Catalysts are renowned international leaders such as CEOs, Heads of State, etc. who command a great deal of political influence and support, and can leverage their extensive personal Networks. Other times they are simply individuals (or groups of individuals) – usually practitioners who have worked in the area -- whose passion for wanting to make the world a better place has an infectious enthusiasm on others to join together to do something different and to affect change.

Synergists, on the other hand, are typically not as well-known, although celebrated and respected experts within their own fields, who ensure the credibility of the GGN's actions. They help build the organizational framework for the GGN by finding ways to keep the different partners regularly engaged. Synergists must not only demonstrate the leadership qualities that 'inspire the heart', but must attend to the crucial, although sometimes mundane, organizational requirements of managing, guiding, and securing

funds.

One of the case studies illustrates the difference between these roles quite clearly – wherein a renowned business tycoon and a Head of State served as the Catalysts, and facilitated the launch of the GGN by helping to unite the different stakeholders. Once the GGN had been established, an expert in the topic area of the GGN was brought in to serve as the chairman of the GGN's international board i.e. as a Synergist. He was the key negotiator in securing the commitment of various groups as partners and was responsible for the cultivating a strong leadership role for the GGN early on.

II.   Practical Visioning

All of the GGNs profiled had clearly articulated visions and/or mission statements. These visions are usually broad, open-ended statements and are determined by the interests, abilities and expectations of the individual GGN members. A vision on how the world could be made a better place is what brings people together to form a GGN.   But the final version of that vision is negotiated at the time the GGN is formed.

As the GGNs gain experience implementing their activities, membership begins to evolve and grow and the group starts to learn together. The vision continues to be the 'inspirational glue' that gives the GGN its focus and rationale for existing. However, insights and understanding that comes from practice leads the GGNs to adapt and modify their activities. And so the vision remains central to the GGN's purpose, but the GGN's success and its ability to partner and bring about change is grounded in the impacts and results it can demonstrate.

In some GGNs, the transition and adaptation is formally re-examined and the GGN re-drafts its vision. In other cases, the original vision remains intact, although the activities of the GGN are modified and changed in response to a changing world and changing partners.

Flexibility and agility is a key for GGNs to stay relevant and to successfully pursue new opportunities and mitigate new risks as they arise. The approach of

practical visioning makes GGNs seem to some as slightly opportunistic in nature, moving away from some original efforts and adopting new approaches. For some GGN partners, the attraction was the clear identification of supporting and taking specific actions to bring about change. *As one interviewee, with a background in the non-profit sector, declared, "The partnership determined the mission of the project… As the partnership evolved and needed to be scaled, the approach shifted to accommodate a new partner's primary interest. It's neither a pro-private sector, nor an anti-private sector approach. Our objective should be to engage flexibly and use the right tool for the right moment."*

III.   Trusted Partnership

Even though each member has their own motive for participating within the GGN and therefore has a stake in its success, it is rare for there to be a formal established framework to hold each member accountable and ensure that commitments are met.

For all their good intentions and earnestness, the impacts and outcomes sought from collaborating with a GGN can never be guaranteed. Unlike in an organization with a clear hierarchical structure where there are rules of engagement, in a GGN, participation is voluntary.

Trust is the key element that makes GGN members willing to participate. Initially the GGN relies on personal trust within the small circle of Governance Intrapreneurs. The Governance Intrapreneur is an internal champion responsible for driving the GGN's agenda within his/her own organization. *This is emphasized by an example from one of the case studies in which buy-in for the GGN from the member organizations was proving a challenge because the envisioned scale-up, which was to be rapid, called for a dramatic increase in the project budget. The Governance Intrapreneurs at each of these organizations successfully managed the expectations of their management teams and championed the GGN project within their respective organizations.*

GGN members believe that more can be accomplished through a GGN than some other effort. But members have to believe that the goals of the GGN will be accomplished, and as a new entity on the governance landscape, that means members have to trust

that the GGN Synergist and Catalyst will be successful. And members have to trust that the other members will play their roles and stick to their commitments.

In the earliest stages of the formation of GGNs, establishing trust among members is a key. As many initial decisions are made about the form and activities of the GGN, the diverse interests of members can strain relations and bring into question whether all members are committed to the common cause. Gradually, as the GGN matures in scale and scope, trust among members begins to be institutionalized.

Often the ability to leverage trusted personal on multiple levels to create institutional confidence is crucial to the success of a GGN. *As explained by one of the GGN Project Managers, by building and maintaining trusted partnerships with international companies, her organization was able to reach out to other stakeholder groups that depended on these companies. In some instances, there had been poor relationships between the international company and these other stakeholders. But the Project Manager leveraged relationships with one partner to attract other partners. In addition, her organization developed the skills and competency to create an environment in which previously unaffiliated stakeholder groups, through their relationship with the GGN, became trusted partners with each other.*

IV.   Standing and Legitimacy

The case studies revealed that standing and legitimacy are two critical factors in claiming the support of potential members and partners.   The Catalyst's expertise and achievements is one important basis for gaining establishing legitimacy.   Reputation as an honest and neutral broker is another crucial factor.   Members of GGNs have their own organizational goals and objectives. And sometimes prospective members of a GGN have had unfavorable interactions before, differences over policy or competing in the same policy space.   A GGN cannot survive for long if it were to be perceived as favoring one member's interests over another.   Quite often, a GGN's legitimacy is personality-driven, which is why it helps when the Catalysts are renowned and influential international leaders.

Once the GGN is established, it has to attract support and endorsement from others on the governance landscape, including government officials, well-known NGOs, foundations. The need to have standing – acknowledgement that the GGN has a role to play in global governance – is one pressure that compels GGNs to have diverse and representative members. If the GGN membership is too narrow or seen as sectarian, other important global governance players will shy away from being partners.

In one of our case studies, the specific GGN is housed within an institute that is widely recognized as the thought leader in its field. Furthermore, this particular GGN has attracted substantial funding and has been able to maintain financial independence.

This fortunate position enhances the GGN's role as an honest broker. With financial independence, it no longer needs to satisfy the specific outcome requirements that are inconsistent with it mission and goals that might otherwise be imposed by various donors.

V.   Confederation Structure

The organizational arrangement is horizontal and networked. This ensures a leveling of individual power and influence amongst the GGN members. Each GGN member becomes aware of the implications of its role in the loose confederation structure. It is typical that some members are more influential in the GGN than others, but the confederated structure allows each member to participate and represent its perspective, and, in some cases, its constituency.

The unifying goal of the GGN is to make some change and make the world a better place. The actions of the GGN are judged on the extent to which this is accomplished. Some members may have strong opinions about how to achieve that change. Or some members may have strongly held believes about why the problems have been created in the first place. But it is the GGNs impact that provides the "bottom-line" for what the GGN should do.

The confederation structure allows members to retain a sense of their own "sovereignty" while searching for common interests and a common cause. As the GGN matures, members become more flexible and more willing to cross boundaries in search of solutions to the global problems they are trying to solve. This structure creates a de-siloization effect within the governance space, which in turn results in the gradual evolution of more effective solutions.

This effect is recognized as the key contribution of one of the GGNs profiled. It was

able to alter the approach taken to solve the global problem, and move its field operations from a vertical approach (where individual organizations worked on specific solutions to one part of the problem) to a more integrated horizontal approach. As a result, it is better able to constantly evaluate its progress and respond in real-time to potential challenges.

An interviewee from another case study also spoke about the impact of having a horizontal structure, "Any change of [the GGN objectives] will have to go through all of our stakeholders. The revision of [GGN] Rules last year was quite an extensive process and it is likely that the [GGN] will be different in a few years' time, but the changes are evolutionary and gradual by learning from experiences in country, rather than revolutionary."

Conclusion and Future Questions

The global governance landscape is crowded and chaotic, with no signs that the phenomena of multi- sectoral collaboration abating. Therefore, it is important to understand how the different models of collaboration function and their relative effectiveness.

Global Governance Networks are a relatively unexplored territory in the space of multi-sectoral collaboration, and many questions are yet to be answered. Future research in this space should include questions on what makes certain GGNs more effective than others, what are appropriate measures of success, how to create resilient and effective global governance that is replicable across issues, time and space.