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From the Selected Works of Maria May Seitanidi

Summer July 30, 2011

Making a Difference: Enhancing the Impact of Partnerships for the Social Good

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/may_seitanidi/30/

Call for Abstracts and Posters
3rd International Symposium on Cross Sector Social Interactions
24-25 May 2012, University of Erasmus, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
info@partnershipsresourcecentre.org

Making a Difference: Enhancing the Impact of Partnerships for the Social Good

ORGANISED BY



The Partnerships Resource Centre at RSM Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

In collaboration with
Hull University Business School, University of Hull, UK

With the support of EABIS- Academy for Business in Society

OCCASION AND AIM OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Cross sector partnerships are one of the most exciting areas to be engaged in for researchers as well as practitioners since partnerships that bridge different sectors (public, profit, nonprofit) are thriving around the world (Austin, 2000; Galaskiewicz and Coleman, 2006; Bendell et al., 2010). Austin (2000) labels these alliances as the collaborative paradigm of the 21st century. Cross sector social partnerships are employed as collaborative strategies to address complex social problems (Waddock, 1989;) as well as to more effectively achieve organisational objectives (Dahan et al., 2010; Porter and Kramer, 2011). Firms, for instance, may search for a longer term competitive advantage through a portfolio of partnerships with non-market actors. Research of The Partnerships Resource Centre (PrC, 2011) shows that the largest firms in the world have on average entered into around 18 cross sector partnerships for a variety of reasons such as market entry, issue resolution, leadership development and HRM, product development. Increasingly, cross sector partnerships are linked to the core business of firms, and away from mere acts

of philanthropy.

Governments too have long been seeking innovative ways of producing public goods in collaboration with firms (Clarke and Fuller, 2010). International organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank have also defined public-private partnerships as means of addressing global public goods like environment or poverty alleviation (Glasbergen et al., 2007). Thousands of international “PPPs” have been initiated in the past decade (e.g. Chettiparamb, 2007; Dixon et al., 2004; Sullivan and Skeltcher 2002). In addition, civil society organisations are also slowly moving away from a confrontational approach towards firms and governments to a more collaborative approach in order to develop novel solutions to old problems, thereby increasing the efficiency of their activities (e.g. Austin, 2000; Le Ber and Branzei, 2009; Seitanidi and Crane, 2009; Stafford and Hartman, 2001; van Huijstee and Glasbergen, 2010; Wymer and Samu, 2003).

In all instances, however, research has shown that most of these partnerships have hardly been planned (Jamali and Keshishian, 2009; Seitanidi et al, 2010), while their impact has to date been only modestly evaluated (Margolis and Walsh, 2003). This is due to the lack of available resources, inadequate research interest, and the lack of interdisciplinary collaborations that are required for assessing this intrinsically interdisciplinary area. Another contributing factor is the great analytical and methodological difficulty involved in assessing the impact and effectiveness of these partnerships as they require often complex methodologies, multi-level tools and longitudinal research designs that are not easy to develop, implement and elaborate. As cross sector social interactions intensify we believe the need for effective and legitimate impact assessment will increase rapidly. Luckily, an increasing number of scholars are taking up the challenge and are currently working on this highly relevant topic from a wide variety of directions.

The 3rd International Symposium on Cross Sector Social Interactions (CSSI) takes stock of these issues and tries to stimulate scholars and practitioners to develop not only knowledge and concepts, but also tools and methods. Following the two previous successful CSSI symposia, the 3rd International Symposium on CSSI is moving forward by taking up one of the most important challenges of contemporary partnership research: how to approach the ‘impact’ question. The symposium intends to bring together researchers as well as practitioners from a variety of areas. It expands the programme structure of the previous CSSI symposia by adding an extra day in order to allow for interactive sessions consisting of presentations by scholars, practitioners and PhD students. The symposium will aim to support efforts of institutionalising this area of research and further contributing to the creation a well-functioning international community of scholars and practitioners.

A CALL FOR CONTENT

Cross sector social interactions encompass different forms of collaborations ranging from philanthropy, sponsorship, cause-related marketing, stakeholder engagement, corporate community involvement/investment, joined-up working and more recently partnerships. These partnerships involve more than one social sector in formations of three possible dyads (Selsky and Parker, 2005):

- ***Profit-nonprofit partnerships*** between firms and NPO/NGOs;
- ***Profit oriented Public-Private partnerships*** between governments and business;
- ***Non-Profit oriented Public-Private partnerships*** between governments and NGOs/NPOs; and one formation that involves all three social sectors
- ***Tripartite societal partnerships*** between firms, NGOs and governments aimed at addressing more complex issues.

The central aim of many of these cross sector partnerships is to promote collaboration in solving economic, social and environmental problems (Crane, 1998), while filling institutional (Kolk and van Tulder, 2005) and regulatory voids (Fransen and Kolk, 2007) in providing social goods such as clean water or education (Warner and Sullivan, 2004). Hence, the common ground of such cross sector collaborative efforts is an “imperative to realise benefits for the wider community rather than for special interests” (Skelcher and Sullivan, 2002a: 752) and in effect address the social responsibilities of participating organisations either in response to external pressures (reactively), in anticipation of potential social issues that may arise in the future (proactively) or as part of the process of interaction by adapting to emergent issues (adaptively) (Seitanidi, 2008; Van Tulder 2010).

Cross sector social partnerships are associated with the expectation to deliver improved and innovative solutions for economic, social and environmental problems due to the combination of the capacities and resources of organisational actors across different sectors (Brinkerhoff, 2001; Gray, 1989; Huxham, 1993). The anticipated and realised benefits for the actors involved have been extensively discussed in the literature. Although the literature has examined what social partnerships are (answering to ‘what’ questions), the motives and drivers behind such collaborations (‘why’ questions), and the process of forming and implementing partnerships (‘how’ questions), it has not yet addressed if partnerships make a difference to society and what the impacts might be (‘so what’ questions). Hence the potential value of partnerships in making a difference to society is not always realised but more importantly if value is delivered it is not monitored, evaluated and reported.

This call for abstracts and posters aims to move away from the instrumental perspective of CSR implementation (Margolis and Walsh, 2003) that prioritises the organisational actors’ direct benefits and foster a critical perspective examining the impacts of partnerships for the actors, sectors and more importantly for society at large, i.e. the intended beneficiaries of cross sector social partnerships (Austin, 2000; Margolis and Walsh, 2003; Seitanidi, 2010). Hence a number of questions remain unanswered that this symposium is inviting scholars to address:

- What types of positive or negative impact do stakeholders experience due to partnerships?
- What are the types of impact experienced by business, nonprofit organisations and the public sector on local, national and global levels?
- Do the marginalised, the poor and in general the beneficiaries of the partnership initiatives experience positive changes as a result of partnerships?
- What methodologies are required in order to capture large scale impacts?
- Under what conditions is it possible to increase the impacts of partnerships for the larger society?
- What are the management and governance challenges faced by social partnerships in contributing to social good;
- How should we re-imagine social partnerships in order to increase their future impacts?
- How do the characteristics and styles of leaders and leadership shape the outcomes and impacts of collaborative partnerships? How is leadership distributed in successful collaborative social initiatives?
- Under what conditions will corporations support partnerships for sustainability when their interests are not the first priority?
- What are the trade-offs and dilemmas that corporations will face in order to deliver increased impacts that prioritise sustainability and the social good?
- Can evaluation and monitoring techniques developed in other areas of research be applied to the area of partnerships?
- What are the impacts on the micro (individual), meso (organisational) and macro (societal) levels of analysis?
- What specific impact indicators can be developed to assess the effectiveness of partnerships?

- Do the impacts of partnerships differ across different cultural and socioeconomic contexts? What particular issues arise in the context of international and cross-cultural partnerships?
- How can we measure partnership impacts? Does measurement (quantification) influence the actual dynamics of the partnerships (quality);
- What skills are needed to enhance the operations and impact of partnerships?
- What are appropriate teaching modules to enhance the impact of partnerships?

PARTICIPATION IN THE SYMPOSIUM

Our intention is to consider a variety of forms of submission to the symposium in order to provide a forum for research at a variety of stages of development, and for researchers at different career stages. We particularly welcome proposals from doctoral and early career researchers. Reflecting this, the symposium welcomes both extended abstracts (600-1,000 words) and poster proposals (600 words - a physical poster will be required if selected). Abstracts should provide a brief overview of your work and/or present interim research findings. Accepted abstract submissions will be offered the opportunity to present their research (around 15 minutes of presentation time) in workshop sessions at the symposium. Accepted posters will be exhibited at the symposium space providing opportunities for scholars to interact and discuss their latest research with the symposium participants. We welcome academic and practitioner research on the symposium topic. Following the selection of papers and posters, authors will be invited to submit their full paper by May 3rd 2012. The best papers will be candidates for inclusion in a special issue of a leading journal in the area (yet to be decided).

SUBMISSIONS/DEADLINES

Abstracts, with a maximum of 1000 words (excluding references), and poster proposals (max 600 words) should be submitted to info@partnershipsresourcecentre.org or to rtulder@rsm.nl by **November 7, 2011**. Please note that these are the only addresses to which submissions can be sent – other types of submissions and/or those sent to other addresses will not be considered. When submitting your abstract, please include in the e-mail message that accompanies your submission a statement that you will, if the abstract/poster is accepted for presentation, indeed come to present it at the conference. It is important to write on the Subject field of your email ‘**Making a Difference Abstract/Poster Submission**’. Please clearly mark if you are submitting a poster or an abstract for a paper. If these formal requirements are not met, the submission will not be considered. Final decisions on acceptances will be sent out around January 1st 2012.

SPECIAL ISSUE

The best papers of the symposium will be selected for a Special Issue for the Journal of Business Ethics (JBE). Special Issue Editors: Van Tulder, Crane, Brammer, Seitanidi

KEY DATES

November 7, 2011	Submission of extended abstracts (600-1,000 words); to: info@partnershipsresourcecentre.org or rtulder@rsm.nl
January 4, 2012	Selection of papers and posters communicated to authors
May 3, 2012	Submission of full paper for consideration to the journal special issue
May 24-25, 2012	Symposium in Rotterdam, The Netherlands

SPEAKERS INCLUDE

Prof. James Austin, Snider Family Professor of Business Administration, Emeritus,
Harvard Business School, Boston, USA

Drs. Bert Koenders, former Minister of Development, the Netherlands

Professor Ans Kolk, Professor of Sustainable Management, University of Amsterdam Business School,
The Netherlands

Prof. Sandra Waddock, Galligan Chair of Strategy, Professor of Management, Boston College, USA
And many more!

Symposium Chair: Prof. Andrew Crane

ACADEMIC ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Prof. Rob Van Tulder - Programme Chair 2012

Prof. Andrew Crane - Symposium Chair 2012

Dr. May Seitanidi - Symposium Co-ordinator

Dr. Carlos Rufin - Symposium Programme Co-Chair 2014

Dr. Miguel Rivera - Symposium Programme Co-Chair 2014

More information on the symposium, including registration is available on:

www.partnershipsresourcecentre.org

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