

## Implementing the Post-2015 Agenda: Building the Backbone / Platforms for Development

The upcoming adoption of the post-2015 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this September, represents a turning point for global collaboration as well as for development in general: multi-stakeholder cross-sector partnerships, which pool knowledge, expertise and resources to achieve innovative and sustainable solutions, are acknowledged as a key mechanism to deliver on the SDGs. The key question now is how these these partnerships can be set up effectively and sustainably at country level, and in particular what infrastructure will be required to systematically drive these strong effective partnerships at the required scale to meet the SDGs.

In June, The Collective Impact Forum, FSG and The Partnering Initiative convened a webinar to explore a very promising mechanism to drive that collaboration: the platforms for partnerships that are emerging in developing countries to convene, broker, and directly support partnerships.

The webinar panel included Geoffrey Kirenga, CEO of the SAGCOT Centre Ltd; Ernest A. Muwamba, National Coordinator, Zambia Business in Development Hub; Sonja Patscheke, Director, FSG; Darian Stibbe, Executive Director, The Partnering Initiative.

This document presents an overview of the webinar highlights.

### The Collective Impact Approach

The implementation of the SDGs will happen at local level. Moving towards a collaborative, sustainable approach to development in order to meet the SDGs will require a fundamental shift. Governments, UN, Civil Society, NGOs and Business, will need to think differently and look for innovative and collaborative solutions.

For FSG, this global collaboration for sustainable development requires a “**Collective Impact approach**” which, in order to achieve largescale change, has **5 key conditions** of success:

- 1- A common agenda
- 2- Agreement on how to measure success
- 3- Implementation through activities that reinforce each other
- 4- Continuous communication to share learning and build trust
- 5- Backbone support (an independent, funded team, dedicated to partnership) - the 5th condition that ensures all others are in place

### Introducing platforms for partnership

The local backbone organisations coordinate implementing partners on the ground. A strong backbone at country level is critical, with the following **key roles**, identified through FSG’s research:

- 1- Translating global agenda into locally adapted strategies and activities that fit the local context
- 2- Mobilizing local partners and coordinating activities/ helping raise funding for activities
- 3- Support shared measurement by collecting and interpreting data
- 4- Encouraging and supporting communication within local partners

Given their crucial role, the **funding** of backbone organisations is a key issue: adequate resources are essential yet most donors hesitate to fund partnering infrastructure, preferring direct to programs. Yet it is precisely by investing in right infrastructure for partnering that will we have a chance of achieving transform change we need for better future in post 2015 world.

And partnership is difficult – most complex partnerships need direct support from highly competent professionals to make sure they are robust and set up to deliver impact. TPI has recently published a **report**, *Platforms for Partnership: Emerging good practice to systematically engage business as a partner in development*, which looks at emerging good practices in these platforms, and found a range of different challenges: driving forces and restraining forces in these platforms. (For instance, inclusivity versus the diversity of competing perspectives, or the need to deliver quick results to prove the concept, when in fact partnerships take time to develop.) (The report is available on TPI's website under publications.)

So how do you create a strong, effective platform? In collaboration with platforms on the ground, TPI has developed a simple **life cycle** of the development of a platforms, and identified a set of key **building blocks** necessary for a platform to be successful.

The platform life cycle has four phases: **Scoping**; **Building** (getting engagement, building understanding; championing; agreeing collectively on agenda; identifying host institution; governance and processes; resources); **Implementing** (brokering, membership management; M&E); **Consolidating** (monitoring the process, reviewing and adapting. membership drops off unless serious value being delivered and demonstrated; and then moving towards sustainable business model).

## **Learning from Platforms in Tanzania and Zambia**

### **Tanzania: SAGCOT**

***With Geoffrey Kirenga, CEO***

SAGCOT is a country based initiative, part of global initiative, the New Vision for Agriculture which was set up in holistic effort to boost agricultural development, with Grow Africa as one of two regional layers, and SAGCOT as the a local backbone organisation coordinating implementing partners on the ground. It started up in 2011, and has now grown to 84 partners, mobilizing commitment of 1bn us dollars in the sector.

### ***Key success factors***

- Alignment between activities at country level and the need at global level to respond to global challenges of food security and food price spikes: this increased commitment in public and private sector to work on transforming the Agriculture sector in Africa.
- Government commitment and championship: this allowed private sector to respond to commitment and focus.

### ***Main challenges***

- PPPs are easier said than done. Many institutions are committed but still operating in silo environment. Most institutions are not primed to work in a partnership environment, and not necessarily accommodating the public-private initiatives everyone wants.
- Many partners, although they have a common agenda, don't necessarily agree on how the agenda should be realized.
- It can be a challenge to attract necessary skills and knowledge to run these partnerships.

### ***Some solutions from SAGCOT's experience***

- Breaking down silos and getting actors to agree on a common agenda: SAGCOT developed a clear blueprint and principles on which to operate. Government support was also a crucial factor as government buy-in allows stronger trust and engagement from the private sector, bringing in knowledge and capital. This requires creating the right environment around government involvement, and producing strong and clear plans.
- Exchange at regional level: The Grow Africa initiative learned a lot from the development of SAGCOT. Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Ghana, are part of the Grow Africa partnership. There is a lot of exchange and communication at the continental level, learning from what other countries have done. SAGCOT was also part of the inception meetings of Grow Asia.

### **Zambia: The Zambia Business in Development Facility**

#### ***With Ernest Muwamba, National Coordinator, and Darian Stibbe, TPI Executive Director***

ZBIDF, hosted by AMSCO, was created in 2014, with a team of 4 brokers, to systematically support, catalyse and scale cross-sector partnerships in order to unleash the power and resources of business on development goals while simultaneously achieving business benefits. It aims to create more conducive culture by raising awareness of role of business in development; establish high impact cross sector partnerships through tailored partnership support; and to turn the facility into a sustainable social enterprise.

ZBIDF is currently developing 7 partnerships across 3 sectors: manufacturing partnerships looking at skills development; agriculture partnerships focused on smallholder farmer productivity & access to markets; and extractives work looking at integrating local SMEs to participate in the growing mining value chain.

### ***Key success factors***

- The champions and advisory group have been a key success factor, providing links and solutions – the group is made up of government, business, development partners, and civil society. More widely, TPI's research on partnership platforms found that this was very valuable in terms of getting engagement of different sectors.
- Understanding objectives and incentives of each sector is crucial – it's important for the platform to be able to speak the language of the different sectors in order to be engaging and championing constructively.

## ***The M&E challenge***

### *How to measure success and what to track?*

The platforms themselves do not undertake action directly, but instead catalyse the partnerships that do the implementation. As such the impact can be very far down the line; the challenge is determining what impact can be attributed to the platform, and how to measure and demonstrate success.

ZBIDF started by developing a sound logical framework and defining indicators over the first couple of years. For ZBIDF the focus of M&E has been, in the short term, on activities to create partnerships (the extent of contribution to effective and sustainable partnerships in Zambia), and in the longer term, looking at the impact of those partnerships. Among other activities, ZBIDF is tracking the number of partnering agreements and businesses involved in these, the level and diversity of active participation in partnership implementation and design, and number partnerships signed and active after 1 or 2 years

## **Questions from the audience**

### **How did SAGCOT convince donors to invest?**

Convincing people to invest is about how they become part and parcel of the initiative itself; they need to feel ownership, and that they are part of it. You sit with them and plan with them so that they feel engaged. Proper planning and solid workable project proposals allowing for returns on investment.

### **What is the role of Philanthropy?**

In delivering on the SDGs, we can distinguish between two types of philanthropy: traditional philanthropy or charitable giving, which can support development but won't necessarily have a hugely transformative role, and '**catalytic philanthropy**', which can have a very powerful role. This kind of funding is different from donor funding: it can be fast, take risks, and **drive new models**. It will be very important in driving new forms of development, new business models to deliver key services at low cost, and in supporting the development of shared value partnerships that will contribute to jobs and improvements in people's livelihoods.

New philanthropic platforms that can connect the catalytic sources of funding will be very important in trialing new pilots and approaches that can then deliver big impact through scaling up, once value has been demonstrated.

### **How wide or narrow should a partnership be?**

ZBIDF's perspective: this has to be determined by the parties at the table in the planning phase, and of course by the donors. ZBIDF works on several sectors in order to demonstrate the added value of partnerships, building a body of work to identify sectors that have a particular demand for this service. There is also alignment between sectors, and a narrow focus would have denied ZBIDF the option of discovering what opportunities lie in each sector.

SAGCOT's perspective: the development of agriculture requires services from other sectors. The reason SAGCOT were able to develop the agriculture corridor was because of existing work and infrastructure related to other sectors. Other sectors are included in planning. SAGCOT uses a single sector approach but success depends on other sectors too. This is really reflected in the corridor approach, which is about strengthening the enabling environment.