Facilitative Boundary Leadership: Enabling Collaboration in Complex, Multi-Organizational Work

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Accessibility
Facilitative Boundary Leadership:
Enabling Collaboration in Complex, Multi-Organizational Work

A dissertation presented

by

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to

The Committee for the PhD in Business Studies

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Facilitative Boundary Leadership: 
Enabling Collaboration in Complex, Multi-Organizational Work

ABSTRACT

Increasing complexity, flatter organizational structures and rapidly changing environments require coordination and collaboration with individuals and teams across organizations. As teams navigate these complex organizational dynamics, spanning boundaries between groups is increasingly relevant for knowledge work. The extant literature has directed little attention towards examining how boundary spanning is carried out in complex, multi-organizational settings in which organization, sector and expertise boundaries are crossed during the life cycle of the collaboration. This dissertation develops a deeper understanding of the practices boundary spanners use in facilitating collaboration across diverse actors in multi-organizational work. I introduce and illustrate the phenomenon of facilitative boundary leadership -- defined as fostering teaming across organizational and sectoral boundaries for mutual benefit throughout the lifecycle of a temporary collaboration.

Facilitative boundary leadership includes four components: 1) aligning objectives, which brings together diverse actors for exploratory dialogue and enables all parties to have mutual benefit; 2) curating interactions across boundaries, which promotes understanding and eases tensions; 3) establishing a collaborative structure, which provides ground rules and roles for interactions and work throughout the collaboration lifecycle; and 4) maintaining a neutral stance, which builds trust and allows the boundary spanner to move across levels and boundaries. This dissertation draws on an in-depth field study at a multilateral development organization
implementing processes to enhance collaboration with external partners. I show that facilitative boundary leadership provided the relational and structural support for diverse actors from different organizations to collaborate and innovate in complex environments, despite numerous differences among actors. This research contributes to the literatures on boundary spanning, cross-sector collaboration and leadership. In addition, it offers practical implications for understanding and improving the effectiveness of collaboration in complex, multi-organizational contexts.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

“The challenge of this business of partnership is that it can be perceived as something very informal. Something like, make friends, you bond, you network. That’s it. Right?...But, it really, really requires a lot of work. A lot of patience and a long-term view, and it’s very difficult.”
–David, Partnership Officer

Increasing complexity, flatter organizational structures and rapidly changing environments require coordination and collaboration with individuals and teams across organizations (Ancona & Bresman, 2013; Edmondson, 2012; Marrone, 2010). As teams navigate these complex organizational dynamics, spanning boundaries between groups is increasingly relevant for knowledge work. Boundary spanning activities are important predictors of team effectiveness (Ancona & Caldwell, 1988), innovation (Hargadon, 1998, 2002), learning (Edmondson, 1999) and team performance (Gladstein, 1984). A great deal of empirical work on boundary spanning has been conducted over the past two decades, yet gaps remain. In particular, little attention has been directed towards examining how boundary spanning is carried out in complex settings in which organization, sector and expertise boundaries are crossed during the life cycle of the collaboration. This dissertation aims to develop a deeper understanding of the practices boundary spanners use in facilitating collaboration across diverse actors in multi-organizational work.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Two trends have intensified the need for a better understanding of boundary spanning across organizations, sectors and expertise boundaries in complex contexts: the growing need to address large, complex problems and the changing nature of teamwork. These trends motivate the research in this dissertation. I discuss these trends more fully in turn.
Growing need to address large, complex or “wicked” problems

There have been numerous calls for collaboration as the world faces increasingly large, complex social, economic and environmental problems (e.g., Kanter, 1997, 2009; Senge, Smith, Kruschwitz, Laur, & Schley, 2008). These problems exist within a turbulent environment (Emery & Trist, 1965; Trist, 1983) where interdependence and connectedness is increasingly part of organizing (Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Gray, 1989). Large scale change requires leaders to confront adaptive and technical challenges, which require different strategies and learning processes (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz, Grashaw, & Linksy, 2009). Addressing these issues also requires new forms of organizing to facilitate these novel forms of interaction. Such problems require leadership to encourage and leverage the resources and knowledge of a diversity of stakeholders, including governments, private firms, funding institutions, education institutions and NGOs (Eggers & Macmillan, 2013).

Organizing to address complex, wicked problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973) tends to require individuals, groups and organizations to cross multiple physical and symbolic boundaries, including group, organization, industry, knowledge and geography (Edmondson, 2012; Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2010; Lamont & Molnar, 2002). The “collaborative advantage” (Huxham, 1996; Huxham & Vangen, 2000) stemming from crossing boundaries allows for groups to address challenges that could not have been effectively addressed without the collaboration of diverse actors. A recognition of the interdependence across organizations, sectors and industries to solve these issues has been observed in a diversity of contexts (Dutton, Golden-Biddle, & Feldman, 2012), such as regional development (Kanter, 1997, 2012), health care (Gerencser, Lee, Napolitano, & Kelly, 2008), energy (Jay, 2013), environmental sustainability (Forsyth, 2010), city regeneration (Cornelius & Wallace 2010), city and
infrastructure development (Eccles, Alusi, Edmondson, & Zuzul, 2012), disaster recovery (Cozzolino, 2012; Rashid, Edmondson, & Leonard, 2013), healthcare (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010) and education (Siegel, 2010).

**Changing nature of team work**

Much of complex, project-based interorganizational work takes place in teams (Engel, 1994; Williams, 2002). Most previous work on teams focuses on contexts in which leaders design stable teams (Hackman, 2002). Teams, however, face increasingly complex and rapidly changing environments (Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cohen, 2012) and engage in knowledge work that is becoming more specialized and non-routine (Mortensen, 2011). Traditional organizational forms have not responded effectively to these changes (Zaccaro, Marks, & DeChurch, 2012). To adjust to the current reality, teams need to be more fluid and dynamic (Mortensen, 2011) by reaching out to a diversity of stakeholders (Ancona, Bresman, & Kaeufer, 2002) and collaborating across traditional team and organizational boundaries (Zaccaro, Marks, & DeChurch, 2012). As such, teams are changing fundamentally in terms of creation, structure, task and organizational contexts.

Several scholars have asserted that traditional team models are falling short of representing the current reality in which teams operate and have introduced new models. For example, Edmondson (2012, 2013) notes that teamwork today must be considered a verb instead of a noun. Edmondson describes “teaming” as a dynamic activity through which teams and organizations can learn and innovate. Teaming, due to its fluid nature, “is largely determined by the mindset and practices of teamwork, not by the design and structures of effective teams”
Effective teaming across boundaries has significant promise to accomplish work in complex, uncertain contexts. In light of these trends that motivate the research, organizational scholars have recognized that addressing large, complex problems through new team structures is challenging, due to the taken-for-granted assumptions and mindsets of collaborators. (Edmondson, 2012; Senge et al., 2008). Next, I review three literature streams, boundary spanning, cross-sector collaboration and leadership. None of these literatures fully describe and explain effective of boundary spanning across organizations, sectors and expertise boundaries in complex contexts. I draw on and integrate these literatures to build theory on the practices of boundary spanners in collaborations that cross multiple boundaries.

CROSSING MULTIPLE BOUNDARIES IN COMPLEX SETTINGS

In an effort to address problems that are too complex for a single organization to address, a growing number of projects involve collaboration among partners from different firms and industries (Edmondson, 2012; Senge et al., 2008). Innovation can arise from combining diverse expertise from individuals from different professions, sectors and organizations (Edmondson, 2013; Hargadon & Bechky, 2006; Leonard-Barton, 1995). Although innovation (Edmondson, 2013) and “even bigger change” (Kanter, 2005) can be accomplished by collaborating across expertise, industry and organizational boundaries, such collaboration is difficult (Bechky, 2006; Dougherty 1992). Cognitively, members experience difficulty aligning the problem and solution the group faces, due to different thought worlds (Dougherty, 1992), frames (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Edmondson, 2003a, b; Goffman, 1974) and mental models (Cannon-Bowers, Salas, & Converse, 1993). Communication can be problematic,
stemming from differences in professional language (Bechky, 2003). When team members hold different norms (Sole & Edmondson, 2002) and values (Kellogg, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2006), conflict inevitably arises (Edmondson & Smith, 2006). This conflict can spark negative interpersonal attributions about other team members’ character, abilities and motives (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985), ultimately derailing collaboration (Edmondson & Smith, 2006).

Several mechanisms to overcome these collaboration challenges have been identified in the literature, such as facilitating team or task related shared mental models among team members to improve coordination (Marks, Sabella, Burke, & Zaccaro, 2002; Marks, Zaccaro, & Mathieu, 2000), reframing (Edmondson, 2003b; Edmondson, 2012) and using boundary objects (Carlile, 2002).

Boundary objects are one way to transfer or translate meaning and negotiate interests across boundaries. Boundary objects are artifacts that “are plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites” (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p. 393). Boundary objects can help to translate and distribute across knowledge boundaries (Bechky, 2003; Carlile, 2002). These objects help members with different expertise or domain specific knowledge to work towards a shared goal.

**Boundary spanners as facilitators of cross-boundary work**

In contexts that require collaboration across boundaries, it is often facilitated by boundary spanners (Carlile 2002; Lingo and O’Mahony, 2010; Obstfeld, 2005; O’Mahony & Bechky, 2008). These boundary spanners serve an important role by helping to transfer information, translate meaning and transform interests (Carlile 2002, 2004). Boundary spanners serve as brokers and translators who can facilitate the flow of knowledge across collaborators (Hargadon
& Sutton, 1997) and create new processes and structures to enable integration across boundaries for coordination (Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009).

Boundary spanners perform various functions to help groups or organizations deal with the external environment (Ancona & Caldwell, 1988; Marrone, 2010). There is a long tradition of work acknowledging that teams and organizations do not operate in isolation. Early organizational theory work on the open systems perspective (March & Simon, 1958; Scott, 1992; Thompson, 1967) argue that organizations operate in complex and changing external environment, and managers need a way to respond to these dynamics. Further, Ancona and colleagues’ seminal work (Ancona, 1990; Ancona & Caldwell, 1988; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992a, b) captures the interactions external to the team and show that teams are embedded in a larger set of relationships.

Boundary spanning encompasses a wide variety of activities at the boundaries of organizational units or groups. By creating linkages across boundaries, boundary spanners are “go betweens” and “interfacers” (Beechler, Søndergaard, Miller, & Bird, 2004). Boundary spanning includes representing the team to stakeholders, coordinating task activities with other groups and seeking information from outside experts (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992a). Boundary spanners have been conceptualized as gatekeepers (Tushman & Katz, 1980), internal liaisons (Katz & Tushman, 1983) and influencers (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Boundary spanning by individuals varies depending on the task at hand (Tushman, 1977). Boundary spanning activities are important predictors of team effectiveness (Ancona & Caldwell, 1988), innovation (Hargadon, 1998), learning (Edmondson, 1999) and team (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992b; Choi, 2002; Gladstein, 1984) and multiteam (DeChurch & Marks, 2006) performance.
Several studies focus on the important roles of boundary spanners in connecting disparate people, knowledge, resources and ideas (Burt, 1992, 2004; Obstfeld, 2005). For example, Hargadon and Sutton (1997) examine how IDEO’s designers were able to leverage the organization’s industry spanning position to bring innovative solutions to its product development work. Lingo and O’Mahony (2010) provide an example outside of the product development context by looking at producers as boundary spanners in the Nashville country music industry. Producers have key integration responsibilities through “nexus work” as they work with different types of experts, such as songwriters, musicians, publishers and engineers. By moving between the roles of strategic actor and relational expert, brokers use their boundary spanning position to help collaborators achieve a collective creative outcome. Kellogg (2014) suggests that boundary spanners in brokerage professions play a key role in coordinating and performing non-core tasks in the space between different professions in reform efforts.

Prior boundary spanning research focuses mostly on dynamics within firms. In particular, it has primarily focused on boundary spanners inside organizations at the group level in new product development contexts. This context encompasses numerous assumptions about the level of alignment around a goal to develop a specific product and the types of incentives that shape collaborative processes.

The practices identified in this body of research, however, may not shed light on between-firm dynamics. Previous teams research rarely addresses the roles and practices of boundary spanners working across multiple organizations. Jones and Lichtenstein (2008) note that multi-organizational collaborative activities may involve actors from different organizations with different goals, differing levels of expertise, overlapping responsibilities, and lack of central authority. These actors collaborate while maintaining a tension between independence and
interdependence (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008). As such, the roles and practices of boundary spanning in multi-organizational contexts merit further examination. A better understanding of between firm dynamics in multi-organizational, complex contexts could provide beneficial insights into successful boundary spanning activities.

I present a context in which boundary spanners facilitate the work of internal departments and external partners. Instead of concentrating on boundaries within one organization, I examine boundary spanners who span departmental and unit boundaries within their organization and across multiple external organizations and even sectors. They cross multiple boundaries at the same time in their work with diverse collaborators. More attention is needed to better understand how multiple boundaries are spanned to develop integrative research that encompasses team, organization and sector level boundary spanning processes.

CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS

Cross-sector collaborations have been rising in prominence since the early 1980s and have grown rapidly in recent years (Selsky & Parker, 2005; Waddock, 2014). These partnerships are convened to address a spectrum of issues and causes including economic development, health care, education and sustainability. More recently, these partnerships have also leveraged the perspectives and resources of multiple sectors with the objective to integrate social and business aims in what Seitanidi and Crane (2014) call “social partnerships for responsible business” in areas such as market development (Doh, Teegen, & Cullen, 2004; Teegen, Doh, & Vachani, 2004) and product and service development (Rondinelli & London, 2003; Sagawa & Segal, 1999). Although this form of organizing is on the rise and some have argued for a “partnership society” (Googins & Rochlin, 2000), there remain numerous open questions about organizing in cross-sector collaborations.
In this research, I draw on Waddock’s (1991) conceptualization of cross-sector collaborations, which are defined as “voluntary collaborative efforts of actors from organizations in two or more economic sectors in a forum in which they cooperatively attempt to solve a problem of issue of mutual concern” (481-482). Gray and Stites (2013) identify sectors as business, non-governmental organizations, government and civil society or communities. Previous research uses the concept of a continuum to capture the dynamism and traits of collaborative relationships (Austin, 2000; Austin, Hesselbein, & Whitehead, 2002). For example, Austin and Seitanidi (2012a) conceptualize cross-sector collaborations with a collaboration continuum. Collaborations on the continuum involve different stages of interaction and levels of intensity. These collaborations range from basic unidirectional relationships that involve a transfer of resources from one organization to another to advanced relationships with significant interdependence that catalyze innovation.

Although the category names in the continua of cross-sector collaborations developed by other scholars do not precisely overlay with those in Austin and Seitanidi’s continuum, all of these perspectives depict a range of cross-sector collaborations that represent from lower intensity, arm’s length relationships to higher intensity, integrated relationships (Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi, & Herremans, 2010; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). These collaborations take different configurations, given the particular context and aims of the partners. These collaborations can cross two sectors (i.e., business and government, business and nonprofit and government and nonprofit) or involve actors from all three sectors (business, government and nonprofit) (Selsky & Parker, 2005).

Cross-sector collaborations differ from alliances among firms (Kale, Dyer, & Singh, 2002; Kale & Singh, 2009), given these collaborations typically have different goals, approaches
and diverse partners compared to traditional alliances (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011; Rivera-Santos & Ruffin, 2010). These varied motivations and diverse partners introduce complexity and uncertainty that make this form of collaboration challenging to create and implement (Manning & Roessler, 2014; Murphy, Perrot, & Rivera-Santos, 2012). Much of the extant research on cross-sector collaboration follows in the tradition of business alliances literature by emphasizing macro phenomena. Yet, cross-sector collaborations are a form of organizing that involves crossing organization, sector, industry, profession, expertise and geographic boundaries (Waddell, 2005; Selsky & Parker, 2005). Simultaneously crossing multiple boundaries is not a contextual feature that is explicitly examined in much of the previous research (for an exception see Manning & Roessler, 2014).

The relationship that businesses have with stakeholders, including government and civil society organizations, is changing, and these stakeholders are increasingly holding organizations accountable for actions that impact the global communities in which companies conduct business (Waddock & Smith, 2000). Furthermore, expectations from these stakeholders are changing and broadening (Austin, Hesselbein, & Whitehead, 2002; Yaziji & Doh, 2009). Companies are embedded in communities in which they operate (Dacin, Ventresca, & Beal, 1999; Marquis & Battilana, 2009), and stakeholders can impact organizational performance (Barnett, 2007; Wood, 1991). Moreover, companies seeking to have greater impact and generate social and economic value (Margolis & Walsh, 2003) view partnerships as a way to pursue strategies such as triple bottom line (Elkington, 1997), blended value (Emerson, 2003) and shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Most companies, however, are ill equipped to effectively collaborate with organizations in other sectors because these collaborators pose different challenges than those that companies typically face with business competitors (Yaziji, 2004; Yaziji & Doh, 2009).
Effective partnerships can benefit companies through developing new capabilities and knowledge (Austin, 2000; Crosby & Bryson, 2010), accelerating innovation (Yaziji, 2004) and addressing challenges through resource complementarity (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012a; Kanter, 1999; Rondinelli & London, 2003).

Despite the promise of tackling complex problems through cross-sector collaborations, numerous structural and relational challenges plague these collaborations. Much of the extant work has documented the challenges that cross-sector collaborations face as partners attempt to work together. Dissimilarities among partners can create contradictions and tensions regarding process, structure and goals (Bryson, Crosby & Stone, 2006; Gray & Purdy, 2014). Numerous factors that contribute to these challenges have been identified in the literature, including differences in decision making styles (Austin et al., 2002), organizational language (Hardy & Phillips, 1998; Hardy, Lawrence, & Phillips, 2006), institutional logics (Bryson, Crosby & Stone, 2006; Vurro, Dacin, & Perrini, 2010), frames (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010; Norwell, 2010), identities (Brickson, 2007), and expectations (Huxham, 1996).

**Intermediaries in cross-sector collaborations**

One way to address the challenges cross-sector collaborations confront is by injecting an intermediary into the partnership process. Previous research in management and public policy has examined the role of intermediaries in cross-sector collaboration as individuals and organizations. Early work on cross-sector collaborations explores the role of organizations as intermediaries (Gray, 1989; Trist, 1983). Brown (1991, 1993) examines the emergence of what he calls “bridging organizations,” which play a role as “a conduit for ideas and innovation, a source of information, a broker of resources, a negotiator of deals, a conceptualizer of strategies,
a mediator of conflicts” (812). By enabling collective action, bridging organizations organize actors to accomplish critical tasks and cope with internal and external threats. Similarly, Stadtler and Probst (2011) also look at the functions of intermediary organizations and introduce “broker organizations,” which have specific experience and capacity to build and/or facilitate cross-sector partnerships by acting as convener, mediator and learning catalyst. They suggest that a third party organization is helpful when partners lack strong cross-sector networks, lack the legitimacy to convene diverse actors or have never worked together.

Intermediaries in cross-sector collaboration have also been examined at the individual level. Practitioners Tennyson and Wilde (2000) introduce “partnership brokers” as individuals who work behind the scenes to create and build partnerships. Building on this work aimed at practitioners, Hundal (2014) identifies five areas where partnership brokers need to show expertise, including facilitation, negotiation, record-keeping, coaching and reviewing. Williams (2002, 2010) also profiles the extensive skillset competent boundary spanners need to have in collaboration across organization and sector boundaries. Although this previous work develops a typology of partnership brokers and identifies key skills in an emerging partnership intermediary profession, this body of work does not go so far as to theorize on the interactions that intermediaries have with collaborators and describe how they span boundaries in their work.

Manning and Roessler (2014) add a dimension to research by examining constellations of internal and external intermediaries. They argue that “bridging agents,” individuals who cross boundaries during alliance formation, help to ease challenges during partnership formation. They distinguish between internal and external bridging agents. Internal bridging agents are employed at the major partner organization or one of the organizations involved in the partnership, while external bridging agents are third party, independent consultants who are brought into the
collaboration to satisfy specific tasks. They assume that internal bridging agents are not formally appointed boundary spanners and are, rather, boundary spanners in practice (Levina and Vaast, 2005). This perspective, however, does not take into account the growing number of dedicated partnership units or offices in corporations, NGOs, foundations, governmental agencies and development agencies with staff exclusively devoted to boundary spanning to develop partnerships and manage external stakeholder relationships (Hundal, 2014). Although this article begins to shed light on the role of boundary spanners in cross-sector collaboration, open questions remain about the role of boundary spanners beyond the alliance formation stage and as collaborations unfold over time throughout the project life cycle.

Although prior research has acknowledged the role of intermediaries in cross-sector partnerships, it has not addressed how these intermediaries cross multiple boundaries to facilitate collaboration among diverse actors. Brokering has been identified as an important function in the formation stage of cross-sector collaboration (Manning & Roessler, 2014; Selsky & Parker, 2005); yet, intermediaries hold numerous roles throughout the life cycle of the collaboration, particularly given the challenges of these collaborations face. Therefore, the work that boundary spanners in cross-sector collaboration perform goes beyond simply serving a broker role of connecting previously unconnected actors (Burt, 1992, 2004).

Little research has examined cross-sector collaborations at the micro-level, as they are typically studied from a macro perspective (Selsky & Parker, 2005). This area has remained underexplored due to the macro focus of institutional theory, alliance and resource dependency, which are the predominant theoretical lens through which scholars have examined cross-sector collaborations. There have been numerous calls for a finer-grained examination of the processes and interactions employed to deepen collaboration within and between partner organizations.
(Waddock, 1989; Austin and Seitanidi, 2012b). An examination of the dynamics of cross-sector collaborations at the micro level is needed because individuals perform core work to manage interpersonal relationships and projects work in collaborations. Waddock (2010) notes that individuals are key “difference makers” in efforts to positively impact large, complex social issues. In addition, individuals are key drivers for learning (Murphy et al., 2012) and open dialogue (Kolk, van Dolen, & Vock, 2010) in cross-sector collaborations. Kolk and colleagues (2010) argue that micro level interactions in cross-sector collaborations may “trickle down,” “trickle up” or “trickle around.” The roles individuals play and the interactions they have with each other can spread to meso and macro levels, influencing the effectiveness of collaborations.

To examine the micro level, I take a practice approach. A practice approach focuses on patterns of work activity in relation to the setting in which it occurs (Orr, 1996). Practices are situated and should be considered in relation to the social, temporal and historical conditions in which they arise (Nicolini, 2012; Suchman, 1987). Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) argue that a practice lens helps scholars examine and theorize novel and emergent phenomenon. They explain that with a focus on practices “the emphasis is on the arrows, on the relationships and performances that produce outcomes in the word…[It] theorizes the arrow to understand how actions produce outcomes” (1249). This lens allows for insight into relations and enactment in contemporary organizing. The practice approach is suitable for explicating the work of boundary spanners in cross-sector collaborations because it provides analytical tools to examine the actions of individuals and their understandings of how to accomplish their work in complex settings (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Orlikowski, 2000, 2002), which directly addresses the aims of my research.
LEADERSHIP IN COLLABORATIONS CROSSING MULTIPLE BOUNDARIES

The leadership literature rarely engages with the practices associated with effective leadership across organizations since these theories have typically examined leadership within organizations. Most leadership theories were not developed with contexts that involve multiple groups or organizations in mind (Hogg, Van Knippenberg, & Rast, 2012; Huxham & Vangen, 2000). Waddock (2014) argues that the collapse of sector, organizational and functional boundaries has created a demand for more collaborative forms of leadership that go beyond traditional top-down leadership. Yet, few scholars have drawn explicit connections between leadership and collaboration across multiple boundaries. Although several articles acknowledge the need for leaders in complex, multi-organizational collaborations (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Gray, 2008), the focus has been on formal leadership through sponsors or champions (Crosby & Bryson, 2010) and shared leadership among collaborators (Bryson & Crosby, 1992; Gray & Stites, 2013). Several recent approaches, however, have advanced thinking on collaborating across boundaries in complex collaborations.

Previous work has theorized on leadership across distinct group boundaries (Crosby & Bryson, 2010; Hogg et al., 2012; Pittinsky 2009; Pittinsky & Simon, 2007). For example, Hogg and colleagues (2012) develop a theoretical model of intergroup leadership, which they define as “leadership of collaborative efforts of more than one formal group or organization toward a joint goal, in which the purpose of the collaboration relies on the presence of these groups or organization” (234). Leading across different formal groups, such as organizations and sectors, present unique challenges, which are rarely acknowledged in leadership research. Leadership in “joining up” across boundaries introduces multiple layers of complexity (Huxham & Vangen, 2000). Although these scholars have laid a foundation for research in this area, empirical work
examining how leaders enable collaboration that spans multiple boundaries remains scarce. The specific leadership practices required to address challenges and tensions that arise in collaborations that cross multiple boundaries with distinct and separate groups merit further attention.

To add to the emerging literatures described in the previous sections and to gain insight into a challenging management problem of growing significance in the economy, this dissertation seeks to address the following question: How do boundary spanners navigate collaborations that cross organization, sector and expertise boundaries, and what practices help the development of effective collaborative relationships?

**Dissertation overview**

I began this chapter by providing an overview of two trends that motivate this dissertation. I reviewed the boundary spanning, cross-sector collaboration and leadership literatures and argued that none of these perspectives provide a full understanding of how boundary spanners facilitate the development and implementation of effective collaborative relationships that cross organization, sector and expertise boundaries. In the chapters ahead, I develop and describe facilitative boundary leadership and the practices employed by boundary spanners.

In chapter two, I describe the research strategy, detailing my data collection and analyses and introduce my field site. In chapter three, I further describe the empirical setting by providing an overview of the organization, its work and its people. In chapter four, I introduce and present data on four facilitative boundary leadership practices. In addition, I identify and analyze the factors that shaped how facilitative boundary leadership practices were enacted across five
partnerships. In chapter six, I discuss the theoretical and managerial implications of my findings, along with limitations and opportunities for future research.
CHAPTER 2. METHODS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I detail my research methodology, including my data collection and analysis. To examine how boundary spanning is carried out in complex, multi-organizational settings, I conducted an in-depth, qualitative study of a multilateral development organization. This study draws on data from semi-structured interviews with individuals associated with the organization’s partnership work. I augment the findings with archival and observational data.

SETTING

To examine how boundary spanning is carried out in complex, multi-organizational settings, I conducted an in-depth longitudinal study of the Office of Outreach and Partnership (ORP) at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Established in 1959, IDB’s mission is to reduce poverty and inequality in the Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) region. Key IDB projects address challenges in sectors including energy, water and sanitation, education and health. IDB offers the products and services of a traditional bank, such as loans, but also provides grants, technical assistance and research products. The organization provides the largest source of multilateral development financing for LAC.

In order to address the demands and complexity of issues faced by IDB’s focal region, ORP had considerable interaction with internal operational departments and current and potential partners from different industries to work on development projects. ORP worked with partners throughout the lifecycle of the partnership. ORP’s portfolio of partners had variation in terms of 1) partner type (NGOs, governments, corporate and family foundations, private sector firms,
financial institutions, universities and individual philanthropists), 2) partnership structure (co-financing, grant making, specific development fund and knowledge sharing) and 3) objective (sustainable cities, education, poverty alleviation, etc.). The context in which ORP worked involved collaboration across multiple boundaries, including expertise, industry, organization, department and geography. Thus, ORP was an ideal setting for examining my research question.

DATA

Given the novelty of IDB’s boundary spanning and partnership efforts and the limited understanding in the literature about boundary spanning in multi-organizational settings, I pursued an inductive approach to the research (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). Rather than starting with an a priori hypothesis to test, I developed the research question and theories directly from and in parallel with data collection in the field. Using a data triangulation process (Van de Ven, 2007), I drew on multiple sources of data from interviews, observations and archival documents. This triangulation process facilitates a holistic examination of historical, behavioral and organizational issues surrounding the case, allowing for a more convincing and accurate account from the convergence of multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2008). I used an embedded case study approach, with IDB as the main unit of analysis and multiple partnerships and projects as subunits.

I collected data at IDB between July 2014 and January 2015. During this period, I conducted 66 formal and informal interviews with IDB staff and its partners, carried out case studies of 9 project teams, reviewed IDB and ORP archival materials from 2007-2015 and observed several organizational events.
Preliminary research

I obtained access to this field site through the Zofnass Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. As one of IDB’s university partners, the Zofnass Program worked closely with IDB on several projects. The Director of the Zofnass Program served as the entry point to ORP and the department’s work. The Zofnass Program Director conducted 9 exploratory interviews with 11 IDB staff members in July 2013, in addition to collecting various ORP and IDB strategic and operational documents. Notes from these interviews, along with the archival materials, were made available to me and served as background for the study’s research design.

To start, I reviewed these documents and interview notes. I developed a set of high level sensitizing concepts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) after reviewing the documents, interview notes and notes from my informal conversations with ORP staff. In particular, the sensitizing concepts clustered around the quality and context of interactions among collaborators and organizational factors influencing ORP.

Two core ORP members granted field access, and I worked with them to develop a jointly beneficial research strategy (Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2003). These gatekeepers helped to identify individuals who had knowledge about the creation of the ORP, development and implementation of new processes, policies and practices, challenges and responsiveness of internal and external partners.

Interview data

My primary source of data was interviews. I conducted semi-structured and informal interviews with individuals who were associated with partnerships and project work at IDB. Overall, I conducted 66 interviews, 37 formal interviews with 39 individuals and 28 informal
interviews with 29 individuals. I conducted multiple interviews at different points in time with key participants. For formal interviews, ORP partnership officers helped me to identify operational department experts and corporate partners working together on various projects. A partnership officer or the ORP administrative coordinator sent an email introducing me to potential participants and provided a brief overview of the study. I worked with the ORP administrative coordinator to schedule and coordinate the logistics of interviews.

Interview Participants. I focused my interviews on three actors associated with partnership work, which include 1) partnership officers and other ORP staff, 2) operational department experts and 3) representatives from partner organizations. Partnership officers managed a portfolio of partners and owned the outreach and relationship building responsibilities for IDB’s partnerships. They were based at IDB headquarters in Washington, D.C., the Europe Office in Madrid, Spain and the Asia Office in Tokyo, Japan. IDB operational department staff had expertise relevant to partner projects. Operational department experts led and supported projects through the design and implementation phases. These staff members were located at IDB headquarters or within a country office within LAC. External partners committed to collaborating with IDB on projects. A focal person was identified within the partner organization. Other relevant partner staff worked on projects, given the geographic footprint and expertise needs of projects.

Interviews. At the beginning of interviews, I introduced myself, my research and Harvard’s confidentiality and privacy standards. I requested permission to record the interview, which was granted by all participants in formal interviews. I relied on an interview guide, but allowed flexibility to enable participants to express their reflections on project and organizational dynamics and relations, based on their functional or organizational role. I asked participants
broad or “grand tour” questions (Spradley, 1979) and more specific questions about interactions with partners and project dynamics. I asked participants about how partnerships began and unfolded, along with interpersonal and project management challenges. I probed for specific details about the projects they were working on, with special attention to challenges, resolution of challenges and innovation. Most participants described multiple partner projects during the interviews. Descriptions of some projects were more exhaustive than others. I asked more extensive questions to partnership officers about their interpretations, decisions points and interpersonal dynamics on specific partnerships and projects. The interview guides I drew on for interviews with ORP staff and partners are provided in the Appendix.

Most formal interviews were conducted face to face and ranged from 30 to 120 minutes. Interviews were conducted in a conference room or the participant’s office. Several interviews were conducted over the phone with participants who were located at a work site other than the headquarters location. Interviews conducted over the phone did not differ noticeably in length or content from those conducted in person. I wrote field notes immediately after each interview, focusing on observations about the participant, environment in which the interview took place and key topics. Interviews were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed. Each interview produced approximately 20-75 pages of transcription and field notes. Table 1 summarizes participants’ characteristics.
Table 2.1 Interview Participants

Primary Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant category</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership Officers</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Department Experts</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDB Executives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Partners</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondary Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant category</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership Officers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Department Experts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDB Executives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Partners</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Archival Data

To better understand the context of ORP and partnership officers’ activities, I collected internal IDB and external archival materials. These archival materials shed light on the international development field, IDB, ORP, partners and projects. Internal IDB and ORP documents included IDB annual reports, IDB strategy documents, ORP launch documents, ORP strategy and mobilization plans, partnership MOUs, internal communication about ORP and activities, partnership reports and external communication (newsletters, blogs and tweets). Project level documents included press releases, project plans, donor memoranda, financial information and performance updates.

To provide additional context to the research, I collected sources that partnership officers frequently read to stay up to date on the international development industry and partnerships.
These periodicals included daily industry updates by Devex, monthly McKinsey & Co. Sustainability Insights newsletters and quarterly issues of Stanford Social Innovation Review.

**Observational Data**

To gain an understanding of partnership officers’ work and their day to day experiences, I observed and participated in several meetings and workshops with partners. During the course of this study, I conducted 48 hours of observation. I observed on site at IDB headquarters and remotely by watching streaming or recorded workshops. During each visit, I spent a number days or weeks on site to immerse myself in the organization’s culture. I stayed full days and sat near partnership officers’ offices and cubicles.

The bulk of my observations were spent observing partnership officers as they interacted with public and private sector partners and operational department experts during two partnership events. I observed the complex multi-actor dynamics facilitated by partnership officers in 10 partnership meetings. In addition, I observed interactions in more relaxed settings, including coffee breaks, lunches, commutes to different meeting locations and receptions. These relaxed settings allowed me to conduct informal interviews. Table 2.2 summarizes the interview, archival and observational data sources.
Table 2.2 Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>45 individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival materials</td>
<td>3000+ pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner updates, Project reports, Presentation slides, Blog postings, Newsletters, Job descriptions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>10 partner meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner meetings, Conferences, Internal meetings</td>
<td>~48 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was conducted in three phases, two exploratory and one confirmatory (Charmaz 2006; Feldman 1995). My emphasis for initial data analysis was on exploration and development of emergent interpretations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I analyzed interviews, field notes and archival documents inductively (Charmaz, 2006). I developed a list of codes based on my research questions and literature review and began the analysis with first level handwritten coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of a representative sample of transcripts and archival documents. I identified themes related to the work that partnership officers conducted related to partner outreach, project development and implementation, challenges with partners and ending projects and partnerships. I wrote memos to explore interesting themes and identify patterns (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

I developed a list of projects with external partners mentioned during interviews. For a subset of projects, I mapped the partners, activities, decision points and challenges associated with projects. I created timelines to better understand how projects unfolded, with particular attention to the perceptions and role of partnership officers. I wrote brief narratives (Eisenhardt, 1989) about the projects. This exercise illuminated the importance of partnership officers as key actors in attending to the relationships among project collaborators.
Through the development of project timelines and memo writing, I began to notice several practices that partnership officers used at various phases of project work with partners. With a sample of transcripts and my field notes, I used these data as a test for the range of practices that partnership officers used in their work with operational departments and external partners. For these transcripts, I wrote vignettes on partnership officers’ practices (Miles and Huberman, 1994). These vignettes included partnership officers’ work with partners at different points in the partnership process. It included their interpretations of what happened and the actors involved. I paid particular attention to boundary spanning episodes that involved partnership officers and other internal or external actors.

I examined the vignettes, along with transcripts and archival materials associated with the projects and partners to identify the actors, conditions and temporal aspects in the development of a partnership relationship. I kept a running list of boundary spanning practices of partnership officers by analyzing subsequent transcripts. As I collected additional data, I checked the list of practices to ensure that it was comprehensive and to help confirm the practices I previously identified. This exercise illuminated the particular challenges of boundary episodes between corporate partners and operational departments. The role of partnership officers in collaboration was particularly salient in the interactions with corporate partners. As such, I decided to focus on partnership officers’ practices on projects with corporate partners.

During the second phase of analysis, I selected projects that were of theoretical interest to provide opportunities to closely examine variance in collaborative activities among project actors (Yin, 2008). The criteria for project selection included three points: 1) the partnership was managed by ORP and had a dedicated partnership officer, 2) the project included at least one
operational department and at least one corporate partner and 3) the project was substantive and required commitment of both financial and non-financial resources from partners.

I focused on 5 corporate partners, across 9 projects to gain a fuller understanding of partnership officers’ practices and roles. I chose corporate partners in two industries, food and beverage and technology. The projects these corporate partners worked on spanned 6 operational departments. These 5 partners were selected for variance in collaboration quality from a larger sample of corporate partnerships managed by partnership officers. Projects were either in the design or implementation phase. Since projects took several years to complete and final project outcomes would not be known during the research period, this variation allowed me to see partnership officers’ practices at various times during partnership work.

I wrote detailed cases of 9 projects with corporate partners. To preserve confidentiality, the names of individuals, companies and projects are disguised with pseudonyms. Some descriptions of projects are slightly altered to preserve confidentiality, but the core details of projects were maintained to describe collaborative interactions. Table 2.3 provides a brief description of project cases.

Table 2.3 Project Case Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Project Focus</th>
<th>Project Status</th>
<th>Corporate Partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunflowers</td>
<td>Assist small sunflower farmers to integrate them into large companies’ value chains</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>BeverageCo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aqua</td>
<td>Provide water and sanitation solutions for the poor</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>BeverageCo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Improve health and nutrition of children</td>
<td>Design/Implementation</td>
<td>BeverageCo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangos</td>
<td>Assist small mango farmers to integrate them into large companies’ value chains</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Soda Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling</td>
<td>Assist waste pickers to integrate them into large companies’ value chains</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Soda Inc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.3 (Continued) Project Case Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water Sanitation</th>
<th>Test new water technology</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Soda Inc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Cities</td>
<td>Support citizens’ quality of life in rapidly urbanizing areas</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>DiversifiedTech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Inclusion</td>
<td>Improve economic inclusion through electronic payment services</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>FinTech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop Keepers</td>
<td>Assist small shop keepers in a distribution network by building capacity</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>BeerCo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I examined patterns within and across cases. I recognized that partnership officers used relational and structural practices to facilitate collaboration among actors throughout the project lifecycle. Across cases, there was variation in the project opportunity and challenge structures through which partnership officers led collaborators. As categories became more complete, I began to consider the literature on cross-sector collaboration, boundary spanning, brokerage and leadership.

Through comparison of the literature and my data, I recognized that the leadership role to facilitate collaborators from different organizations and sectors had not been theorized in prior work. I focused on conceptualizing the phenomenon of facilitative boundary leadership. In the final confirmatory phase of analysis, I systematically searched transcripts, field notes and archival documents for instances of facilitative boundary leadership. I iterated between the data and the literature until no additional new themes or patterns were identified (Charmaz, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research design and methods of this dissertation. I take an inductive approach by drawing on interview, archival and observational data. I adopted
analytical techniques to generate insights from an embedded case study with multiple partners and projects. In the next chapter, I describe the context of my research and identify key actors associated with facilitative boundary leadership practices.
CHAPTER 3. THE ORGANIZATION, WORK AND PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I describe the features of the setting of the research study in which I derived facilitative boundary leadership. I provide an overview of the organization and the environment which catalyzed the creation of a dedicated partnership unit. Then, I offer a description of the early challenges faced by partnership officers while creating and developing the Office of Outreach and Partnerships (ORP) and their subsequent work.

STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY OF IDB

An important backdrop to partnership officers’ work was the major reform efforts the organization was implementing at the time of this study. IDB was attempting to navigate multiple layers of complexity and ambiguity. The sources and tools of development financing were becoming more diverse, while IDB faced increased competition as countries in the LAC region had growing access to alternative sources of financing. New actors, including private sector firms, foundations, academic institutions and NGOs, were increasingly involved in the international development space. Previously, IDB had not collaborated with many of these new actors. More leaders in private sector companies were pursuing triple bottom line or shared value strategies and experimenting with inclusive business models. These companies were increasingly attractive partners for IDB, due to the private sector’s know-how, innovation, efficiency and skill set.

In addition, IDB was attempting to respond to increasing challenges in the region, including rapid urbanization, poor infrastructure, high poverty rates and low educational results. Despite the remaining challenges in LAC, the IDB President believed the 2010s was “the decade
of Latin America and the Caribbean” (Moreno, 2011) and the time was ripe for innovating to close the gap on lagging key indicators in the region. To adequately address these challenges, the IDB President aimed to create and foster a culture of innovation through increased collaboration of experts across the organization and with actors outside of the organization who could bring new perspectives to development work.

New task and organizing demands arose from the changing external environment, requiring new organizational processes. As a part of the organization’s realignment efforts, a strategic priority was to develop partnerships with organizations connected to IDB’s development work. A main component of the strategy was to shift from a bank with its own resources that performed a traditional donor coordination role to a more entrepreneurial, partnership oriented organization that could make more substantial changes in the LAC region and other geographies by incorporating the resources and innovative solutions of partners.

The President of IDB initiated the creation of ORP in 2008 as a part of a realignment effort to address IDB’s perceived loss of relevance and presence in the LAC region. According to one of ORP’s strategic documents, the unit’s purpose was to facilitate IDB’s goal to “play a catalytic role in coordinating collaborative platforms between multiple actors in order to generate innovation in development practices in LAC.” There, however, was no standard or model for creating a dedicated partnership unit or partnership strategy among IDB’s peer organizations.

Partnership officers in ORP developed and nurtured collaborative relationships with businesses, international organizations, universities, NGOs and public sector entities in Japan, Korea, China, 16 European member countries and Israel. ORP’s staff was diverse, with 22 nationalities represented in the 30 member unit. In addition to ORP’s office at the IDB headquarters in Washington DC, it also had staff in Spain and Japan to cover IDB’s activities in
the Europe and Asia, respectively. ORP reported directly to the President, due to the importance of partnering as a part of IDB’s strategic priorities.

CREATING ORP AND EARLY CHALLENGES

The founding team of ORP faced a number of challenges inside the organization. At the time of ORP’s creation, IDB positioned itself in a traditional donor coordination role. The internal culture was built upon the logic that the IDB was a bank with its own resources and could generally perform mandated tasks on its own. Further, it was a siloed organization by expertise and country, making collaboration across internal boundaries challenging. Partnership officer David described the legacy structure of the bank saying,

Basically these organizations were created as big development supermarkets. The whole concept 50 years ago was that you go to a development bank as a [government] minister and say ‘I’m going to do education. I want to do microfinance. And give me something on health.’ You assemble the package and say ‘this is going to cost me one billion dollars,’ and then the bank will send you the check, which is a great model because it gives you a lot of options. But the down side to that is that it is very fragmented. It is very difficult to navigate…The transaction cost of collaborating are hiding in any organization, but with an international public development organization, it can be particularly common.

IDB’s structure was designed to mirror the secretaries and ministries of its government clients. This structure, however, caused challenges as the development projects IDB pursued were increasingly complex and required expertise from multiple parts of the bank and outside actors. Most operational departments had historically operated as solo experts and projects were rarely structured to cross issue sectors within IDB. Accordingly, operational department experts did not have much experience with working with individuals with different expertise within IDB.

Before ORP, IDB lacked an established partnership process and had a history of ad hoc partnering. These scarce partnership activities were mostly transactional and primarily focused
on mobilizing funds from partners for projects. IDB pursued transactions with third parties, primarily with governments, since the organization was established. The organization had a very specific way of entering joint transactions with the legacy model. In this model, IDB entered a loan with a commercial bank or government, which would give a bilateral contribution to finance funds or loan operations.

Several years before the creation of ORP, partnerships with organizations other than governments were created by operational departments on an ad hoc basis. The operational department team may have received direct contact or met a representative from a potential external partner. They would have initial discussions and if there was interest in working together, they would continue with the project development process. This approach led to fragmentation and variation in how external partners interacted with IDB. From these ad hoc partnering activities, the ORP team inherited 15 active partnerships. No clear map existed to show how each partnership was being managed since partner agreements were not systematically organized.

Peer organizations had not developed a partnership model that the ORP team could draw upon; thus, they approached the creation of the unit from an experimentation perspective. IDB’s legacy development tools and structure left little room to innovate to address the loss of relevance in the region. The IDB President encouraged partnership officers in ORP to perform its work as an innovation unit within the bank and to pursue partnerships as a way to experiment with new processes, business models, tools and development approaches.

As ORP gained momentum internally, partnership officers focused externally, uncovering a new set of challenges. An advisor to ORP recalled the early days of the group’s efforts and the challenges they faced externally saying,
For phases we were a little bit like Google, with chaos management rather than normal, within the bank’s definition of normal, because we didn't know who we were outside and who was willing to partner with us. And we didn't know who we wanted to partner with, as well, because at times we’d get approached or we’d go and find potential partners, but then our internal partners would not see the same value in it.

In interactions with early partners, partnership officers had not developed a clear system to assess the capabilities and skills partners could contribute to project work. Furthermore, there were no mechanisms to scope out clear objectives and action plans to guarantee implementation of existing agreements.

The manager of ORP, who worked in various roles at IDB in the last decade before leading ORP, said,

It was very tough to get the ducks in a row within the first couple of years and convince people of the value of partnership. And to get people on the outside to see that it was good. Outside, I would say, was easier in a way because people outside don’t know much about the internal. If you line up everything, then I’ll work hard to have it. They don’t realize how much work you need to make things happen sometimes. And also when it’s on a small scale, you can do a lot of babysitting of things, and they don’t realize what's behind [it]. When you get larger scale, then you have to have a system. Otherwise you won't survive.

In order to reach IDB’s goal of becoming increasingly collaborative, ORP became more selective in approaching new partners, with a detailed process of engagement. With a goal of prioritizing and incubating partnerships, the focus became to mobilize resources, foster innovation, and increase visibility and knowledge transfer.

**PARTNERSHIP OFFICERS**

The nature of partnership officers’ work was very different than the work of operational and technical staff at IDB. Partnership officers needed to meet very specific requirements: the predisposition to learn and understand the knowledge of IDB’s core business and procedures as well as these of key external stakeholders; an ability to connect and mediate among practitioners
from different cultures and mindsets; flexibility and rapid execution of competing tasks; curiosity; and a drive towards innovation. At the senior level, the ideal candidate brought experience in partnership development and management, strategic business development, negotiation and diplomacy, effective and efficient problem solving, change management, strong communication and public presentation skills.

The manager of ORP felt strongly about finding the right types of people for the partnership officer role. Partnership officers performed a very complex set of tasks, many of which had not been identified and coded into the IDB’s human resources practice. Partnership officers described their role in numerous ways. These descriptions included terms such as: curator of external accounts, account manager, translator, integrator, convener, educator, coordinator, communicator, intermediary, lubricant, deal maker, match maker and switchboard. These descriptions of the work aligned with partnership officers’ job descriptions, which were kept overarching and broad to enable partnership officers to move quickly and adapt to the changing external environment. The manager of ORP talked about what he looks for in partnership officers. He explained,

I have a mix of people. People from internal, and people from the outside. So I think it's very important in this type of institution to have an understanding of the culture and how it works. If you miss the internal part, I think in every institution or company the internal culture is super important, but in this one, whoa. I think it’s way too difficult, way too difficult...So some are very savvy, people persons. [They] know how to read, when to fight, when to stop, so that is very important. Of course you need somebody that is good at communicating, good at being creative because nothing is in a template here.

Partnership officers noted that they needed to be creative and flexible. There was a high level of novelty with the creation of new partnership models since each new partnership was customized. Partnership officers facilitated project-based organizing on complex, system level issues. These
projects crossed multiple boundaries, including department, organization, expertise, industry, sector and geography.

With the focus on building the team of partnership officers primarily with high potential, highly educated earlier career individuals, growing the network of potential partners came from a different source. The manager hired an advisor who was an “outsider within.” This advisor split her time consulting ORP and other global organizations. This advisor had a strong global network and worked closely with the manager of ORP and the IDB President on “partner activation.” Based on the partnership needs or opportunities identified by ORP, the advisor leveraged her network to initiate conversations at the executive level of a potential partner. If initial conversations indicated interest in the potential partner and IDB working together, then the advisor passed the contact on to a partnership officer to begin the partnership engagement process. The IDB President also held an important role in facilitating initial conversations and idea generation with potential partners. Partnership officers referred to the IDB President as the “Chief Partnership Officer.” The IDB President promoted IDB as a partner of choice in LAC to his executive level peers as he carried out the other duties of his role.

With this type of work, ORP benefited from being small, horizontal and agile. Yet, the significant workload, competing priorities and constant multitasking generated daily challenges for partnership officers. One partnership officer said she was trying to master the art of knowing which task was “a crystal ball or a rubber ball” to help prioritize her work. Knowing which things a partnership officer can drop without significant consequences was an issue due to the intensity of managing the work of a portfolio of partners and projects. Partnership officers balanced ongoing identification and development of potential partnerships while nurturing
existing partnerships. The manager of ORP and other senior team members had a constant concern about team members burning out from the demands of the job and leaving the team.

Partnership officers had a different style of performance review compared to the majority of staff in operational departments. Partnership officers’ performance was based on the qualitative responses of operational department representatives and external partners on the innovation of partnerships and quality of interactions. ORP used 360 degree style performance reviews, where the internal operational departments and external partners with which partnership officers’ work responded to a series of questions about the interactions with and value created by the partnership officer. Although partnership officers were directly incentivized to develop and sustain partnerships via performance review metrics, operational department experts did not have a similar metric.

**SUMMARY**

This chapter described the context in which partnership officers performed their work. I provided an overview of IDB’s structure and strategy, along with a window into the creation and development of ORP. I highlighted salient features of partnership officers’ skills and environment. ORP was an appropriate organizational setting to examine boundary crossing across multiple boundaries because partnership officers worked with diverse actors inside and outside of the organization in their everyday work to develop and foster partnerships. In the following chapter I will detail five partnership cases to illustrate the practices that partnership officers use within this context.
CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the findings regarding the facilitative boundary leadership practices of the partnership officers I studied. These findings illuminate both relational and structural supports offered by these practices. I show that partnership officers can enable, through facilitative boundary leadership practices, diverse actors from different organizations to collaborate and innovate in complex environments.

In this chapter, I first introduce four facilitative boundary practices that emerged from my data on partnership officers’ behaviors. Next, I give an overview of partnership cases and illustrate each practice in context, using specific cases of partnership officers’ work with operational departments and corporate partners. These cases provide an account of the demands and challenges of collaborative actors and of the practices partnership officers use in response to the demands and challenges they face. I provide a comparative analysis of these cases to demonstrate the key facilitative boundary leadership practices partnership officers used. The chapter closes with a summary of the findings I present.

FACILITATIVE BOUNDARY LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

I identified a set of leadership practices that I call facilitative boundary leadership, which I suggest fosters teaming across organization, expertise and sector boundaries for mutual benefit throughout the lifecycle of a temporary collaboration. Facilitative boundary leadership includes four practices: 1) aligning objectives, which brings together diverse actors for exploratory dialogue and enables all parties to have mutual benefit; 2) curating interactions across boundaries, which promotes understanding and eases tensions; 3) establishing a collaborative
structure, which provides ground rules and roles for interactions and work throughout the collaboration lifecycle; and 4) maintaining a neutral stance, which builds trust and allows the boundary spanner to move across levels and boundaries. In the next section, I describe and analyze each practice in turn. Table 4.1 provides illustrative data on the four facilitative boundary leadership practices.

Table 4.1 Facilitative Boundary Leadership Practices and Key Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practices</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Purpose of activities</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aligning objectives</td>
<td>• Learning about collaborators’ objectives</td>
<td>Bringing together operational departments and corporate partners to find areas of overlapping interest</td>
<td>“We do have cases where the operation department says I want your help in this or that. It’s match-making. Sometimes you get to generate interest externally, and sometimes you can’t when working with companies and others. We might be doing very interesting things in education in Ecuador but a lot of people don’t want to work in Ecuador.” (Mary-Partnership officer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Matchmaking</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Especially when you are working with a new company, they are trying to figure it out and they want to trust you. I don't want to sell anything. I try to build our business case…[I say to them,] ‘Ok, if your problem or your opportunity fits with my developmental agenda, then we can do this. It does work for you? It doesn’t work for you? Let's talk about resources.’ That approach has worked very well…It's a lot of work. I think it's something that the partners appreciate.” (Mike-Partnership officer)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Finding a win-win</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Redirecting misaligned activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Curating interactions across boundaries</td>
<td>• Educating</td>
<td>Promoting understanding, resolving misconceptions and proactively addressing</td>
<td>“There could be some frustration due to the lack of understanding of the culture, and so you have to be very patient and educate both sides. You become a translator, an interpreter between the outside world and the inside world. So you need to know both</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.1 (Continued) Facilitative Boundary Leadership Practices and Key Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges across boundaries</th>
<th>Worlds very well. It's not only about knowing languages. You can keep the Italian pronunciation like I have, but you need to understand the culture behind English and the culture behind Spanish. It’s not all about knowing the words.” (Claudia-Partnership officer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Basically, we’re working together on a voluntary basis. We just want to pursue this opportunity. So, we have to lower transaction costs, speed up the learning curve and create incentives for the operational teams to engage. Then they know that someone is responsible for the institutional coordination; that we’re going to be there no matter what.” (David-Partnership officer)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishing a collaborative structure</th>
<th>Documenting the intention to collaborate</th>
<th>Documenting and establishing ground rules and roles for interactions and work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Establishing a collaboration protocol</td>
<td>• Operational neutrality</td>
<td>“In the MOUs we try to say, these are all the areas that we can work on. Let’s give ourselves three years. Let’s have an action plan. Let’s see where we’re going. If we come to three years, that might be a moment where we then evaluate whether we continue what we do.” (Mary-Partnership officer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-exclusivity of partners</td>
<td>• Staying impartial among partners and not engaging in operational elements of projects</td>
<td>“We always say honest broker because we cannot be biased in the opportunity, in presenting the case. We open to all if others come with something similar, are we’re also open to do it with them. So we have to be super neutral in our approach.” (Ben-Partnership officer)</td>
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### ANALYSIS OF PRACTICES IN CASES

**Partnership Cases**

In this section, I present a general description of the partner cases I studied. These five cases were selected for variance in collaboration quality from larger sample of corporate partnerships managed by partnership officers. Partnership officers navigated collaborators
through numerous interactions as these partnerships unfolded. I describe three partnerships that
experienced positive collaborative interactions and two partnerships that faced significant
challenges.

Soda Inc. and BeverageCo were early partners after the partnership office was
established. Both partnerships developed into multi-issue, long-term relationships with multiple
projects that involved teams from across the organizations.

BeverageCo. Partnership officer Mike managed the relationship with BeverageCo, a
global beverage and food company. IDB and BeverageCo started working together on a
recycling project in 2008. After establishing a positive relationship, BeverageCo saw other
potential opportunities for the collaboration to grow. BeverageCo had made some ambitious
public commitments on sustainability, and the company wanted to explore opportunities with
IDB to help them with achieving the goals related to these commitments. BeverageCo was
interested in pursuing activities that made strategic social investments and contributed to the core
business, enabling the partnership’s projects to span the company’s foundation and core business
divisions. The partnership focus areas included water and sanitation, recycling, youth
development, disaster relief and recovery, sustainable agriculture, nutrition and food security and
sharing knowledge and best practices about sustainability.

Soda Inc. The partnership with Soda Inc., a global beverage company, started after
several exploratory partnership conversations between the IDB President and senior executives
at Soda Inc. in 2008. Soda Inc. was particularly interested in working with IDB on water and
sanitation issues. Partnership officers Matthew and Hector took ownership of the relationship
with Soda Inc. After a successful project early in the relationship, the two organizations
expanded their relationship to other areas of shared interest, including sports for development and expanding economic opportunities for low-income women and youth.

A more recent corporate partnership with FinTech showed successful and positive collaborative interactions.

FinTech. Partnership officer David managed the relationship with FinTech. FinTech started to work with David in January 2014, after previously sponsoring an event with IDB. FinTech’s newly created Public-Private Partnership group, which leveraged benefits at the intersection of the development and corporate worlds to tackle underserved communities, was interested in expanding the two organizations’ activities together. Joint projects addressed issues including economic inclusion, transparency and financial formalization through the expansion of electronic payments.

On the other hand, interactions with two corporate partners presented challenges for partnership officers, due to several collaborative pitfalls.

DiversifiedTech. DiversifiedTech is a US-based multinational technology company that designs, manufactures and sells networking equipment. Partnership officer Val began talking to DiversifiedTech after a company representative contacted IDB in 2013. The DiversifiedTech representative approached the partnership as a potential sales opportunity for DiversifiedTech’s technologies across IDB’s diverse sectors of work, including city infrastructure and water. The relationship had numerous challenges at key junctures.

BeerCo. BeerCo, a global brewing company, worked closely with partnership officer Mike. After working on several programs to develop small retailers in their distribution channel, BeerCo approached IDB in 2013 to expand the reach and impact the company’s inclusive
business programs. The partnership faced multiple challenges and stalled during project design before the inaugural project moved to the implementation stage.

**FACILITATIVE BOUNDARY LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN ACTION**

In this section, I present and analyze interactions among collaborative actors and the role of partnership officers in five corporate partner case studies. I identify key factors in collaborative interactions that enable collaborators to overcome pitfalls in collaboration across organization, sector and expertise boundaries. These cases illustrate facilitative boundary leadership practices in action by highlighting the demands and challenges partnership officers faced in working with operational departments and corporate partners, along with partnership officers’ perceptions and actions. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 provide data on facilitative boundary leadership practices by partner case.

**Practice 1: Aligning objectives**

Partnership officers aimed to acquire a strong knowledge of operational departments’ and potential partners’ objectives, motivations, cultures and limitations. Through ongoing dialogue with operational departments and corporate partners within their portfolios, partnership officers gained an understanding of individual, departmental and organizational objectives. As partnership officers learned about actors’ objectives, they unearthed the knowledge, know-how and resources that collaborators could bring to project work. To align objectives, partnership officers looked for areas at the intersection of development and business where working together could bring greater and meaningful development impact while maximizing business interests. The sweet spot was when partnership officers found areas where both the operational department
and the partner could bring resources and ideas to the partnership, enabling co-development of projects. An experienced partnership officer explained, “It's really like a marriage, and you need to know the other person quite well and go out with the other person a few times and have common values and common understanding of certain values and so and so forth.”

To ensure that partnership activities aligned with IDB’s overall strategy and the objectives of operational departments, partnership officers frequently participated in operational departments’ meetings and stayed up to date on activities via email and reports. Partnership officers also took time to carefully read and understand the agendas of the operational departments they supported, which outlined the areas of focus for the departments for the next year. Partnership officers helped operational departments articulate their resource needs and challenges that could be satisfied through partnerships.

Due to IDB’s partnership centralization policy, all potential partners were directed to partnership officers for vetting and initial conversations. Through exploratory meetings with potential partners, partnership officers aimed to uncover the commercial and corporate social responsibility priorities, strategies and challenges of the company. Partnership officers documented what they learned about these potential partners’ organizations to draw upon at a later time.

For example, Mike used both formal and informal channels to gain knowledge of BeverageCo and operational departments’ objectives. He scheduled and facilitated formal meetings to discuss strategies and priorities. He also gained information about objectives in more informal settings such as company retreats, elevator chats and coffee breaks. He developed a series of meetings for corporate partners to discuss corporate social responsibility issues and
exchange information. He learned a great deal about the partners from the conversations, even though conversations were not directly related to partnership work with IDB.

Mike took a pragmatic or opportunistic approach to assessing strategic alignment with partners. A pragmatic approach occurred when partnership officers found an overlap in objectives for both the operational department and the partner in an issue area. An opportunistic approach occurred when an operational department or corporate partner suggested a new content area or approach to an issue. This approach allowed operational departments and corporate partners to explore and co-create a project in a new issue area. Mike described his perspective on alignment saying,

I'm very good at listening. I'm very good at developing empathy by proving to the partners that I care about them. And for that, I now get to their real motivations. What is nice is that instead of working in the problems, I work in the opportunities. On a personal level, it's much more beautiful.

He encouraged operational departments to view partnerships from a win-win perspective. He recalled a conversation he had with an operational department expert:

When I came to this office, the emphasis was on the mobilization of resources. The operational units of the bank thought of ORP as an ATM machine. Every time they requested money, I would advise them to think about being in the corporate partner’s shoes. Why is the corporate partner going to give you money for a project? What is the win-win? As a result, we have seen a more thoughtful approach to innovation, with operational department chiefs discovering how they can learn and innovate by working with large multinationals.

He coached collaborators as they not only thought about their own objectives, but also learned and reflected on other actors’ objectives and limitations.

After several successful projects focused on water and sanitation with IDB, BeverageCo talked to Mike about the company’s strategy to address malnutrition and obesity. BeverageCo had an interest in the area, but did not have a fully developed idea of how to carry out a project to address these issues. The company was interested in working with an IDB operational
department that had strong expertise in issues. Mike saw a match in objectives with the Health operational department. He recalled his initial reaction as he aligned objectives between BeverageCo and the operational department,

Our Health Division used to be hardcore [about not wanting to work with private sector partners] in the bank. [The department head would say] “Oh, the private sector, you are asking us to maximize profit”. When BeverageCo asked me to arrange a meeting with him I was saying, ‘Oh my God. This is going to be nasty. I better get myself a helmet.’ I was expecting a reaction [from the Health Division] like, ‘I won't sell my soul or something like that.’ To my surprise the answer was, ‘Yes, I’m very interested, but I also request something from BeverageCo.’ I almost asked for time out. To my surprise, he said, ‘I need BeverageCo’s support in logistics and marketing because the public sector is really weak on these two matters, and BeverageCo is a leader’….The Division Chiefs are discovering that working with large multinationals allow them to learn and to innovate in the way they work.

The health operational department’s openness to working with BeverageCo allowed Mike to facilitate conversations and align objectives without significant and damaging internal push back. Furthermore, the operational department’s perspective on leveraging the corporate partner’s resources and knowledge in a way that could only come from partnering set the tone for early interactions the partnership officer facilitated. This perspective enabled operational departments to see partnerships as a way to learn and innovate in project work and better serve IDB’s clients.

Partnership officers aimed to have partners feel as if they adequately understood partners’ strategies, objectives and limitations to sincerely find the best solutions for mutual benefit for all parties. As trusted advisors, partnership officers navigated partners through IDB’s complex structure to find operational departments that might have an interest in working with the partner. For instance, after conversations with FinTech about the company’s objectives and strategies, David explained to FinTech how IDB was structured and the roles of various departments and units. He took great care to explain how IDB was structured because the organization could appear to be a very complex organization to potential partners. In these initial meetings, his
priority was to ensure that the two organizations had visions that aligned. David believed values alignment was an important early milestone in working with partners.

David set up consultation meetings for FinTech representatives to meet with several operational departments. He invited operational departments that had strategies and action plans that could potentially align with FinTech’s objectives for public-private partnerships and its work in Latin America. David described these meetings as speed dating, in which he encouraged operational departments and representatives from FinTech to share information about their projects and objectives. This information enabled David to assess if there was a partnership match. David facilitated further dialogue between operational departments and FinTech where there was alignment in shared objectives.

Ann’s perspective as a corporate focal point shaped the relational environment in which David aligned objectives. For corporate partners with focal points who viewed partnerships with a lens that accommodated and balanced both development and business activities, partnership officers could facilitate a relationship that had mutual benefit for IDB and the corporate partner. Ann viewed partnership work through a lens that accommodated social and business activities. She was a part of a team that was created to bring together the commercial assets of the company and the development community. Her team took a long term, strategic approach to partnerships. FinTech’s senior leadership supported longer term partnerships, allowing Ann to have time to develop strong relations and leverage the company’s insight and resources to innovate. Having worked on development issues in both corporate and nonprofit organizations, Ann believed in the benefits of the development and corporate worlds intersecting to tackle challenges to improve the lives of underserved communities.
Some operational departments were ambivalent about working with FinTech, since most operational departments had very little experience working with the private sector on projects. David encouraged operational departments to open up to doing their work differently and pushing beyond their traditional development tools by exploring partnerships with corporations,

Sometimes, especially in the development organization, [operational departments say] ‘Oh, we don’t know what to do with companies. Those companies, maybe they’re trying to sell me something.’ But the fact that you have someone [the partnership officer] there that will say, ‘Hey, this is an institution. Us, the IDB, I’m here to actually explore opportunities for collaboration. So, it’s perfectly fine. Open your mind. Be innovative. Think about things that we can do together because your institution is backing you up.’

Through David’s reassurance, he reframed partnership work with corporations for operational departments as a way to innovate and reassured operational experts that he would facilitate partnership work.

Some partnership officers faced even harsher resistance from operational departments as they attempted to align objectives. These operational department experts were not open to working with corporate partners and the perspectives these partners would bring. Matthew explained the resistance to working with corporate partners he experienced:

You have people who are open to working with partners and others that are bitching out every second of our meeting because they don’t want to work with anyone. [Some operational department experts say,] ‘It’s more work. If I need to work with this partner, what am I gaining out of this?’ They don’t see it…That happens a lot…They’re self-centered. They just think that what they’re doing is amazing.

As an expert focused organization, operational departments were used to focusing inward and relying on the expertise within the department. Operational department experts were incentivized to focus on projects with traditional instruments that supported the organization’s main business. With these traditional instruments and approaches, operational departments drew on their deep expertise in the development world and the focal issue, without much regard for perspectives from other actors. Partnership officers attempted to create and foster a culture of working with
partners as a way to innovate within IDB, which deviated from the inward expert culture that existed for most of IDB’s history.

Although the partnership with Soda Inc. was a successful, long term partnership, the early days of the partnership were challenging as Matthew attempted to convince operational departments of the value of partnerships to align objectives. The partnership officer manager recalled the perspective of operational departments during the early days of partnership work with Soda Inc.,

There’s a lot of mistrust [internally] with working with the private sector. [The operational departments said,] ‘What? Soda Inc.? Whoa, Soda Inc. is bad because of this or because of that. Or because they’re causing obesity in Mexico, we shouldn’t work with them. This is wrong. Why should we do it?’

Responsible for the relationship with Soda Inc., Matthew spent a great deal of time talking to operational departments about their strategies and attempting to convince them of the benefit of partnership work. Matthew wanted to get to know the operational departments and what mattered to the experts. He explained,

Some people they are only into resources or only into knowledge. Some of the technical people here, they’re interested in one little thing of a macro project, but they’re interested in that so they go directly to that. It’s like, ‘listen, they might contribute to this but let’s hear the whole story because they might be also inclined to do a partnership.’ You have to play a little bit. It’s very personal. It’s not just relationship management with the partners. It’s also with our internal partners, stakeholders and technical people.

With this knowledge about objectives, Matthew had ongoing dialogue with the operational departments to find ways to position collaborative work with Soda Inc. in line with the preferences and individual objectives of operational department experts. Matthew reframed work with Soda Inc. as an opportunity for operational departments to achieve their strategies and leverage expertise in a new way on projects. This reframing eased the mistrust and bias that
operational departments held and focused on the opportunities that partnering with Soda Inc. would bring.

Operational department experts who were open to new perspectives and knowledge viewed work with corporate partners as another way to advance their projects. Corporate partners brought new knowledge, know-how and resources to development projects. Partners’ perspectives and resources helped some operational department experts find innovative ways to design and implement projects to address development challenges. Openness from operational departments was important because these experts had to directly work with corporate partners throughout the project. Partnership officers did not get involved in the design and implementation of projects and could not complete a project on their own. Thus, operational departments had to be on board to successfully execute projects with partners.

Operational departments that were not open to idea of partnerships and integrating knowledge resisted working with partners and efforts of partnership officers. Partnership officers faced challenges aligning objectives in this case. Without the openness and support of operational departments, collaborations rarely moved past early exploratory conversations or faced significant challenges early in project design.

On the other hand, partnership officers faced challenges stemming from corporate partners’ perspectives when attempting to align objectives. In her work with Nate from DiversifiedTech, Val found it challenging to match his sales objectives with operational departments and align objectives. Conversations that Val set up between Nate and operational departments were shaped by his role as a salesperson representing the company’s sales interests. Val said,

DiversifiedTech has been so difficult to find something to actually do with anybody in the bank because we thought and everybody thought that they just wanted money from
the bank. We cannot keep that money. We said we need to work in partnerships, and it was very difficult for them and for us to understand how to work in partnerships…With Nate it took a lot of effort.

Nate approached the partnership as a potential sales opportunity for DiversifiedTech’s technologies across IDB’s diverse sectors of work. He described what he viewed as a successful outcome,

So a win in this case is sales. We win if we sell, if we can start a business selling to Latin American companies. We care about development impact, but that is not how we measure our success. We care about development impact because we know that if we figure out a way to have a substantial development impact through reducing unaccounted for water, we will sell a lot. So that’s the reason we care about development impact.

Corporate focal points, like Nate, who viewed the partnership solely through a commercial lens shaped interactions such that partnership officers faced challenges throughout the partnership.

Val found a shared interest in technology in sustainable cities between DiversifiedTech and the operational department working on a sustainability cities project. Val was persistent about making sure the right types of people with technical knowledge from DiversifiedTech talked to the operational department. With deep knowledge about the operational department’s objectives and the personalities of team decision makers, she knew a potential partner had to strongly align with the team’s objectives or the relationship would not materialize into collaborating on a project.

In the sustainable cities department, Val worked with an operational department expert who was open to working with partners and closely with Val to integrate them into project work. Howard, the sustainable cities operational expert, had a strong expertise in infrastructure and was interested in better understanding the external landscape and moving the project forward. He was open minded and saw the value of corporate partners bringing additional perspectives and knowledge to sustainable cities project’s cross cutting problems. Howard had an open attitude
towards exploring options with companies for an extended period of time, as long as the company showed an interest in project’s work. This attitude allowed Val to keep conversations open with potential corporate partners and explore numerous options for collaboration. Howard found the ongoing interaction with these companies beneficial because he had a chance to interact and learn from executives and technical staff at companies that had a shared interest in cities.

As Val attempted to find other areas where DiversifiedTech could collaborate with operational departments, she continued to face challenges aligning objectives between other operational departments and DiversifiedTech. Val enlisted David’s help with a potential match for DiversifiedTech with the Broadband department. David had numerous conversations with Nate about working with the Broadband department. He explained as he attempted to align objectives between Nate and the Broadband department,

    We have to work with them until we find the double bottom line. We have to figure out what they’re looking for. This is why it’s important to have a dedicated person, [the partnership officer]. It’s like geothermal. You have to drill one, two, three, four, five, six times before getting to oil. Without a dedicated person in this role, after one, two or three drills, that would be it.

Although David did not find a clear partnership action to initiate a project with DiversifiedTech and the Broadband department, he kept the conversation open about exploring different possibilities. His focus on opportunities took the focus off of the roadblocks that could have stunted the development of the relationship between DiversifiedTech and the Broadband department operational experts.

    Working with sales people as the corporate partner focal point presented a challenge for partnership officers. Partnership officers’ scope of partnerships did not include corporate partners directly selling to IDB. As a public multilateral organization, IDB followed stringent competitive
procurement processes for companies that wanted to sell products or services to IDB headquarters or for projects in the region. When partners had conversations with partnership officers the leaned towards sales calls or even hinted at a sales pitch, partnership officers worried that the conversation might lead to corporate partners believing they could get an advantage in the procurement process through a partnership, which was in direct conflict with IDB’s procurement process. Due to the incentives and objectives of focal points with a purely commercial lens, partnership officers preferred working with focal points who could view the partnership from a lens that included both development and business dimensions. These types of focal points were typically found in corporate social responsibility, government affairs, corporate foundations or core business functions.

Some corporate partners who started conversations with partnership officers did not move forward to jointly developing projects with operational departments. Although conversations from initial meetings may not have revealed synergies related to operational departments’ current work, partnership officers still valued these interactions. They gained greater insight into the potential partners’ companies and industry trends. Partnership officers kept the conversation open with these potential partners, acknowledging that identifying an opportunity to work together may take more time to build trust and an ongoing exchange of information.

Partnership officers served in a protective role by being very careful about working with companies that had questionable activities that did not align with IDB’s values and mission. In addition to conversations with potential partners, partnership officers performed extensive research on potential partners’ activities to assess their values and reputation. Partnership officers
discontinued relationships with companies that engaged in activities that would put IDB’s reputation at risk.

In the aligning objectives practice, partnership officers brought together diverse actors for exploratory dialogue to enable all parties to have mutual benefit. Partnership officers proactively learned about collaborators’ objectives, performed matchmaking between partners and operational departments and redirected misaligned activities.

**Practice 2: Curating interactions across boundaries**

Partnership officers drew on the knowledge they gained during the extensive time they spent learning about partners to promote understanding between operational departments and partners. Both operational departments and private sector partners brought biases to their discussions. In finding areas where partners and the internal department could benefit and leverage unique knowledge and resources, partnership officers took on the role of educator to help all parties understand each other.

Due to their knowledge of the internal culture and frequent interaction with many types of external organizations, partnership officers served as translators between partners and operational departments. Although all of the parties spoke one of IDB’s official languages, the same words could mean different things to individuals from different social worlds. Claudia reflected on recent interactions with partners and said, “There could be some frustration due to the lack of understanding of the culture and so you have to be very patient and educate both sides. You become a translator, an interpreter between the outside world and the inside world. So you need to know both worlds very well.” Partnership officers took a translating role to help prevent or address breakdowns in communication or negative perceptions.
As the facilitator in consultation meetings, David ensured both FinTech and operational departments understood each other by educating and translating. David typically encountered and addressed misperceptions that operational departments and corporate partners had about each other. David said,

What if you didn’t have someone playing that role of translator, of being basically there to be the honest broker, third party? Our colleagues think ok these [partnership officer] guys are there, so we have the backup of the President. So it’s not going to be perceived that I’m meeting with [a company] because I’m going to give them a contract down the road. At the same time, the colleagues from the companies say well I’m not meeting with this guy, and I don’t know who he is. Maybe he’s not going to deliver. He looks kind of bureaucratic. I don’t really like that tie. It could be as simple as that. He might make a strange joke. But then, again, we empower and the empowerment goes both ways. So, anyway, what I’m trying to say is that having these type of structures [like the partnership office] within these type of organizations is fundamental if you want to drive innovation, if you want to have people working together to make something different.

He viewed his translation role as helping to prevent negative and potentially damaging perceptions, particularly early in a partnership. Through educating and translating, David wanted to create an environment for operational departments and partners to have transparent conversations about how working together could benefit all parties involved. He wanted to provide an incentive for collaborators by removing or proactively addressing barriers to collaboration. He believed he was most effective in addressing barriers to collaboration when he became a trusted advisor to both operational departments and FinTech.

Due to the nature of FinTech’s core business, some operational departments assumed the company’s interest in working with the poor was to get them into more debt. Ann talked about the challenges she encountered working on public-private partnerships with other development organizations saying,

Some entities see us as a dollar sign… That’s all they think. So, the way they’ve interacted with corporations in the past has been through CSR or perhaps nothing. So, the way they see us is, ‘Oh, that’s a dollar sign.’ So, literally, I feel like sometimes I come into the door and people are just seeing me as dollar sign. So, I either have to clarify I am
not a dollar sign…We’re not evil. There are a lot of those sorts of misperceptions I think that happen.

David drew on his knowledge about FinTech and the company’s objectives to explain the values alignment between the two organizations. He said,

Sometimes just the explanation of exactly what [the partner] is is is fundamental…So, sometimes it requires a little bit of education. Also, being with them to help them understand how to navigate things is important. It helps the conversation go in a constructive way.

David created a safe place for Ann to clarify the perception about the company’s core business and its vision for international development. Ann explained how this environment differed from her work with other development organizations,

The [ORP] team has really done a good job at helping to educate people internally…This is actually happening right now with another development organization that we’re working with. It’s just been meeting after meeting that I have to explain the same things again and again. That gets wearing and kind of tiring too. So, the fact that we know we have a partner that has really laid the ground work internally helps us. We don’t have to re-explain again and again. It’s just super helpful.

David followed up with FinTech and the operational departments to determine if there was interest in working together.

Through educating and translating, partnership officers created a safe space for operational departments and partners to have transparent conversations. The types of partnerships that partnership officers established were not governed by legal instruments, such as contracts for exchange of services. This lack of legal enforcement set the types of partnerships that partnership officers worked on apart from traditional strategic alliances among for profit businesses. Without these enforcement mechanisms, alignment that benefitted all parties was even more central to working and translating across boundaries and overcoming subsequent challenges. Partnership officers’ role in fostering effective partner interactions and identifying
areas where all collaborators could benefit was essential in these types of non-binding relationships.

An area that caused tension among collaborators was temporal orientation differences. Typically, development organizations and private sector companies pursue opportunities and tasks on different timelines. When the private sector had a quicker timeline for accomplishing work, partnership officers helped set expectations with operational departments and partners about the pace of project design and implementation. IDB and the governments with which it works tended to have a slower timeline than the private sector partners. Although timelines were established as a part of the project documents, partnership officers monitored aspects of project pacing and facilitated on-the-fly temporal readjustments.

For example, David set temporal expectations between FinTech and operational departments as they worked more closely to design the potential projects identified in the action plan. The FinTech representative described how the company and the private sector more broadly viewed time. She said,

> In the private sector, in some cases, we have a very snappy timeline. We’re all about getting things that we want to do done. And so working with, whether it is government or development organizations, can be challenging.

David responded to differences in temporal expectations to help move the project design stage forward. He gave an example saying,

> So, you have the technical lead [from the operational department] who’s going to do the project... So, this guy is going to move very slow. You have the institutional focal point and the technical guys. These guys [from the corporate partner] are going to move very fast. This is sometimes unsustainable, and if these guys start talking to each other, this guy is going to drive this guy crazy or, vice versa. Sometimes you have to be here, and you’re the one following the same speed... And then, simultaneously, you’re working internally to move things. So, it’s so tricky. Basically, here, you have to slow down things in a sustainable way and here you have to speed up things in a sustainable way without offending anyone. And, you have to do it in a sincere way.
FinTech’s dual lens that accommodated development and business impact shaped the company’s perspective on partnerships, and the company took a long term, strategic approach to partnership work. This perspective allowed David to successfully synchronize timing around activities on the projects operational departments worked on with FinTech.

Differences in pacing among different actors on the project caused challenges, and partnership officers facilitated interactions among collaborators. By drawing on their knowledge of the incentives, parameters of the partner agreement and the long term agenda of the partnership, partnership officers synchronized the activities of operational departments and external partners to move projects forward. In addition, having a strong, trusting relationship with partners allowed partnership officers to speed up and slow down actions in a manner where project actors were not offended.

On the other hand, partnership officers had challenges working across boundaries to synchronize activities when the corporate focal point had a shorter term, commercial orientation. For example, Nate with DiversifiedTech structured his work around the pace of the industry and his incentives. Nate spent 20 years in various positions doing development work and had extensive knowledge of the development world. Accordingly, on a personal level, he cared a great deal about development work, but his objectives were based on his weekly, monthly and quarterly sales quota attainment. This short term objective clashed with IDB’s long term perspective on development, presenting challenges for Val as she curating interactions between DiversifiedTech and operational departments. This temporal difference was further intensified by the rate at which DiversifiedTech, as a company in a competitive industry, moved and the rate at which IDB accomplished its work as a highly siloed, bureaucratic organization. Nate remained
worried, as he was left without a clear commercialization structure in place to convert the relationship with IDB to meet his and the company’s sales goals.

Partnership officers encouraged and assisted corporate partners and operational departments when the collaboration faced challenges. Focal points at private sector partners occasionally ran into challenges mobilizing financial and human resources or gaining buy in from key internal stakeholders at this stage. Due to the breadth of some partnerships, the corporate partner representative had to gain buy in and resources from several departments such as corporate social responsibility, marketing, corporate foundation, government affairs and operations at headquarters and in Latin America. This challenge was further amplified by changes in staff at the partner, which impacted involvement and buy in at the crucial stage of trying to get the partnership off the ground. Partnership officers supported the partner focal point by drawing on their knowledge of working with many partners and help to brainstorm ways the focal point can address the challenge. In some cases, partnership officers stepped in to curate interactions within corporate partners’ organizations. This support for the partner focal point helped the partnership officer establish a relationship where the partner focal point could openly discuss both opportunities and challenges throughout the partnership.

With their focus on facilitating relationships across boundaries, partnership officers were attuned to factors that put stress on the relationship. Partnership officers put themselves in between the corporate partner and the operational department while resolving complex challenges to prevent internal and external actors from talking to each other. For example, Mike owned the partnership between BeerCo and the operational department for a small retailers development project. Although collaborators had a shared interest in the project, there were significant differences they had to overcome. Mike recalled,
It has been complicated…we have a serious cultural clash…In the case of BeerCo and the operational department, it’s important that the working relationship is good. But sometimes there are suspicions and misunderstandings that you can’t risk having them talk about. And maybe there’s some competition, which doesn’t go the way you want it.

To address the suspicions and differences that collaborators had, Mike placed himself in between collaborators and played the role of the bad cop. He explained his role as the relationship bad cop:

The bad cop is when, for example, if we ask BeerCo to provide the budget. Two months go by, and we don’t have the budget. So I say, ‘BeerCo, we’re building trust. Not provided this information is not good’…I mean when you don’t see eye to eye, or when you see that something is not going to work, you have to call your partner and say, ‘Hey, Houston, we have a problem.’ Sometimes they get upset, and you take it for the team because you are from this office. You are trying to seal that the operational unit so the relationship doesn’t get hurt. Being a punching bag is another way to put it.

By putting himself in the middle, he could resolve challenges and translate to ensure collaborators were speaking the same language with a shared meaning. As the relationship facilitator, Mike navigated collaborators through differences by shielding them from the potentially negative perceptions that may arise when there are disagreements or suspicions.

Likewise, Mike recalled his work with BeverageCo during a tense time in the relationship when he put himself in the middle of collaborators to move the partnership forward:

[When there are disagreements between two sides, sometimes I] don’t get this one [collaborator] involved. And many times you’ll have the opinion of BeverageCo employee and the BeverageCo employee thinks that you are just a broker who doesn’t know anything. When you get fire from both sides you say, ‘I’m doing my job.’ At the end of it, people appreciate it. They see. I remember I had difficult internal conversations at the bank with colleagues, I was saying, ‘Don’t throw in the towel. We are going through a low period. Just go on. We are managing it. Just have trust in our office, but also in the partner. We need to deal with this, but this is what we are doing.’ People at the end of it come later saying, ‘You were right.’

By putting themselves in the middle of internal and external actors during these critical times, especially early in a relationship, partnership officer preserved positive feelings between the
operational department and the partner as they moved into the project work of designing and implementing together.

Partnership officers discontinued their efforts to enable collaboration when operational departments declared that a partner did not meet the technical requirements to execute the project. For partners that no longer aligned with the operational department’s strategy or the technical requirements of the project. For example, Val managed discussions around discontinuing partnership activities. For Howard, Val’s role of discontinuing partnerships was positive. He said,

It’s great to have them [ORP] in the sense that it’s kind of a buffer for us. Now I don’t have to deal. I don’t have to fight with you. If technically this doesn’t work, the political side of it they take the lead on that. As Val said, they deal with the problem. It's a nice way of doing it because to some extent you’re protected. You don't mix the technical with the political aspects because if the technical person starts discussing the political aspect, then things start to turn a little bit sour.

Val managed the discontinuation of partnership activities with the operational unit, potential partners and other stakeholders, such as donor countries and executives within IDB. Val’s system level perspective on partnerships and knowledge of relevant dynamics within and outside of IDB gave her visibility into which relevant stakeholders linkages needed to be addressed.

Val’s role in working with stakeholders with an interest in the project or specific potential partners was particularly important when potential partners started conversations with IDB through the IDB President or at the executive level of the potential partner.

But at least then we can try to see different options and see if at the end of the day, when the President meets with the President of [the potential partner, we can say] we tried this, we tried that and the technical team too. It's more like a way, if it doesn't work, of showing that we did all we could in order to work, but I mean I cannot push more.

These additional steps that Val and other partnership officers took in working with potential partners that were passed down from the Office of the President helped uphold IDB’s reputation.
as a trusted and honest partner for development work. Managing interactions across boundaries when discontinuing partnerships by addressing stakeholder linkages enabled partnership officers to build trust and keep the door open for future dialogue or collaboration.

In the curating interactions across boundaries practice, partnership officers promoted understanding and eased tensions. By educating and translating, partnership officers addressed challenges and misconceptions across boundaries in the collaboration.

**Practice 3: Establishing a collaborative structure**

Partnership officers established a two-pronged collaborative structure that helped them to build trust by establishing partnerships with a long term perspective and ensure operational capacity of temporary, project-based collaboration. Partnership officers took an integrative, systems level approach to their relational interactions, as they had visibility into partnership relations at the strategic and operational levels.

Partnership officers’ relational work existed on two planes, the organizational and project levels. The structure was flexible enough to adapt to the complexity and uncertainty associated with working with challenging, systems level social issues. The structure, combined with the reflexive and dynamic nature of the partnership process, helped collaborations unfold, despite the nonlinear aspect of the types of complex issues partnership projects addressed. Moving across the two planes allowed partnership officers to quickly respond as partners’ and project needs changed over time.

The organizational level partnership structure was customized for each partner, given their unique objectives and needs. The organizational level structure grounded the partnership, as the nature of the problems IDB pursued with partners was complex, unpredictable and constantly
changing. By providing coherence for partners across IDB, the organizational level infrastructure served as a backbone for collaborative activities at the project level.

The organizational level infrastructure established the scope of partnership work through several documents. Partnership officers worked with internal and external parties to develop these documents. A key document was the action plan. This document scoped out key boundaries around joint work and identified areas of action for partner activities. It included a road map of opportunities with areas of action, along with a brief description of planned activities and projects, responsibilities of IDB and partners and a target date for implementation. This action plan fed into a more formalized memorandum of understanding (MOU), which documented the convergence of interests with partners.

As an illustration, Hector described his role in establishing a collaborative structure in the water project with Soda Inc.:

We [partnership officers] usually step in when we are structuring the partnership. If it’s needed for the institutional agreement, we check if there is any reputational risk for the bank. Then we get internal approval from the president’s office. Also because we have, in a sense, a broader picture. We don’t get to the day to day execution, but maybe we know that Soda Inc. is doing something with someone else [with a different operational department].

Hector coordinated and facilitated additional conversations between the operational department and Soda Inc. to assist the operational department expert developing the project plan. Hector explained, “We don’t want to have an empty MOU. We really want to have actions for that MOU…The technical cooperation will actually take place later in time but it needs to be discussed maybe at the moment that the MOU or the Letter of Intent is being signed so that we guarantee that this is not an empty thing.” He facilitated the conversations between the operational department and the internal grants management department to get internal approval for project funds. He also had ongoing informal conversations with the fund administrator who
managed the IDB fund that could financially support the project. Hector used the project plan developed from these discussions to populate the MOU and action plan documents.

Likewise, David talked about the importance of establishing the infrastructure before moving to project implementation with FinTech, saying,

So a lot of [internal] people just jump and say, ‘Oh, we have a partnership with this company. I want to do this. Let’s jump in. Where do I sign?’ But, [I say] let’s talk about it…You have to really understand how this works, what are the incentives, how we collaborate, and so on, and then the different roles of the teams.

With aligned objectives from FinTech and operational departments and interest in working together, David established an operational and strategic collaborative structure. When eager operational departments wanted to move towards designing and implementing projects immediately, David explained to them the importance of establishing a collaborative structure. With the goal of developing a vision of working together over time, David worked with FinTech and interested operational departments to build a roadmap of opportunities. This roadmap identified the types of projects the two organizations could work together on and the timing of projects. The roadmap identified early projects that could be quick wins for both IDB and FinTech, along with other projects that were strategic and longer term in nature. This road map served as the input for a more formalized action plan. In addition, David established a more formalized MOU, which established the rules of engagement of the collaboration and included elements such as a communication protocol and confidentiality agreements.

Unlike some strategic alliances or partnerships between for profit organizations, the MOUs that IDB established with corporate partners were non-binding. David explained,

MOUs can be MO-dos or it can be just some nice photo op. It’s really up to each organization to decide what they want with this type of agreement. So, the President says I don’t want MOUs, I want MO-dos. The way we do that is, first of all, we don’t sign agreements that have an undefined termination date. We’ll say, ‘sure we’ll sign an MOU. It’s going to be for three years.’ Number two, we try to incorporate language that calls for
a development action plan. Three, more importantly, this office tries to basically really push that intention to become concrete projects. It’s a key way of keeping track of what’s going on.

David continued by describing the result of establishing this structure with FinTech:

We gained enough of an understanding in a framework agreement that created the pipelines of collaboration, both financially fiduciary and institutional…It’s just a question of matching projects, priorities, and funding capabilities. The conclusion was now we have a huge pipeline and mobilizations…Working with FinTech is a very structured thing. I mean, internally everybody knows. So, it becomes a system of collaboration of organizations. At least on the IDB side, it allows us to work with people, manage expectations.

By working with FinTech and operation departments on documents at the strategic and operational level, David developed a collaborative structure that guided collaborators on what and how they would be working on throughout the lifecycle of the collaboration.

Depending on the scope of the collaboration and requests of partners, partnership officers created other documents. For some partners that had aligned objectives and where an extended collaboration across multiple projects was negotiated, partnership officers facilitated the development of an MOU. The MOU outlined the shared partnership objective and areas of action. From the IDB’s President’s direction, partnership officers encouraged “MO-dos instead of MOUs.” This perspective focused on taking direct action on partnership activities, instead of developing more documents about the partnership. Accordingly, partnership officers increasingly initiated partnership activities without an MOU.

Many times partnership officers fostered the relationship with new corporate partners by facilitating a single project without establishing an MOU. Take the partnership with DiversifiedTech, for example. In early exploratory conversations with Val, Nate expressed interest in pursuing an MOU between the two organizations. Typical with other partners he encountered in his sales role, he requested the MOU template form to fill out. Instead of an
MOU form, he was sent a template form with instructions on how partners could transfer resources to IDB for joint projects. It was common for both IDB and partners to devote resources to show a commitment to the partnership and projects. Nate described his reaction after an IDB representative sent him the resource commitment form,

I didn’t say this to him, but I was like ‘are you smoking crack? I’m not giving you money.’ First of all, maybe there is some rationale for us to give you the money, but why? For what purpose? Don’t just send me a form that says how I’m going to. The how we give you money isn’t it the interesting part. It’s why would I give you any money? He is coming from the point of view of all these other dudes who give cash, that’s not what we do.

Val, however, emphasized finding ways to work together and executing rather than simply signing an MOU. This block on signing an MOU was a source of frustration for Nate. He understood the MOU was non-binding, but he was interested in the MOU with IDB to show his and other executives’ work on developing a potential sales relationship with IDB.

The organizational structure also established a communication protocol by identifying focal points at IDB and partner organizations. This protocol stipulated that communication related to the partnership would be channeled through the focal points, who would facilitate the day to day relationship management aspects of the partnership. As the IDB focal point, partnership officers sought to present a unified message to external partners through this protocol. In addition, partnership officers served as a single point of contact for operational departments and partners for the relationship. For example, the FinTech representative found this protocol helpful:

Even if we have top level support with other organizations if they don’t have a formal structure team like David’s team where their role is just this, there are too many other things going on and sometimes initiatives or needs that we may have just don’t [get attention]. David will tell you. I’m on the phone with him every other day. [With other organizations,] needs that we have that we need to resolve, we really don’t feel like we have a point of contact we could ring up regularly. For good or for bad.
The protocol also created a mechanism for accountability by ensuring that tasks or concerns that were communicated from either side received appropriate follow up and avoids issues from falling through the cracks.

The Office of the President reviewed this set of documents. Partnership officers had to have the approval from this office before they could usher partners and operational departments to project implementation. David described the impact of approval from the President in his work with FinTech:

I think it makes the difference because you can’t have a partnership within an organization if they’re not empowered; if they don’t have the capacity to move an organization a little bit to basically go and deal with the roadblocks. It’s very easy to get stuck. And, it has to be both a combination of both high level support, but there has to be operations and capacity. You have to be able to work with the team to go to the trenches… You have to have support from your senior management because, otherwise, it’s very difficult to manage the organizational differences.

Approval from the President gave partnership officers an executive level seal of approval as they moved throughout the organization to advance partnership work. Ann, the FinTech partner relayed,

The thing that is really helping us the most in this partnership is the fact that [ORP] is structured in such a way that it is right in line with the President and his office. So, if and when we do hit any road blocks, [our partnership officer] literally has the ability to go where he needs to go and get top down support and distribute that across the organization.

Support from senior management helped partnership officers have horizontal and vertical access to information and human resources to adequately follow up on opportunities identified within the documents they jointly produced with partners.

The areas for collaborative work identified in the roadmap of opportunities in the action plan fed into the project level structure. Technical experts in operational departments took the lead in developing the structure and documents at the project level. Project documents focused
on specific technical and operational aspects of projects. The Donor Memorandum was a document produced by the IDB project team, along with partnership officer. This document outlined project objectives, funding sources, key external stakeholders related to the project, roles of partners, risks and mitigation strategies, governance structure and a project framework with indicators and key assumptions. The Donor Memorandum developed a shared understanding of the system and the problem the project would address. It enabled the project team to build consensus around a common vision and clear objectives to support the execution of the project.

At the project level, partnership officers stayed up to date during project implementation by proactively checking in and staying up to date on email and phone communications as the IDB focal point. They had an understanding of operational departments’ sectors, countries and work. This information enabled partnership officers to link the operational department with additional resources and knowledge that could advance their work on current or future projects. For example, on the sustainable cities project, Val continued to look for additional resources and partners that could support the project. The operational department expert on the sustainable cities project explained,

She's thinking ahead of what could be good for us, always thinking from this aspect. And sometimes we are so involved in the problems of some of the project things that's it's hard for you to look from outside and say hey you are missing this or that. It's not only that they bring new projects, sometimes they bring money…Having somebody that is very aware of the problem that you have and that participates openly in the relationship process, that is very, very important. I mean in my case and in my sector, it's the best asset that we have.

Checking in also allowed the partnership officer to continue to learn about the ongoing and potentially shifting needs of collaborators during the project life cycle. While partnership officer scanned for additional partners and resources for the project, the operational department could
focus on the technical and operational elements of the project. Partnership officers brought new ideas, given their extensive knowledge of all of the project partners and mobilized additional resources to maintain the project’s momentum.

In the establishing a collaborative structure practice, partnership officers documented the intention to collaborate and established a collaboration protocol. This structure provided ground rules and roles for interactions and work throughout the collaboration lifecycle.

**Practice 4: Maintaining a neutral stance**

As they convened, aligned objectives and curated interactions, partnership officers maintained a neutral stance. Two factors characterized partnership officers’ neutrality: partner and operational department neutrality. Through maintaining a neutral stance by openly inviting participation and staying off collaborators’ turf, partnership officers were able to work across IDB and corporate partners to facilitate interactions at all stages of the collaboration.

By not favoring or having exclusive relationships with partners, partnership officers created a space for organizations from different sectors and industries to come to the table as partners to experiment and collaborate on an equal playing field. Ben explained,

There’s no exclusivity in trying to find space for each partner and continuing with our support…When we have the opportunity to partner, we offer it to all, and to the best of our knowledge, the best operational opportunities that we know in the system.

Unlike operational departments that used specific products on projects, partnership officers were product agnostic. Operational departments were incentivized to use loan products on projects, which contributed to IDB’s core business. Partnership officers, however, were open to investing time and energy into developing customized partnerships across IDB and products. This approach allowed them to find the best alignment of objectives between operational departments
and partners, while experimenting with new approaches to projects. This neutrality helped partnership officers build trust with private sector partners that have a financial and reputational stake in partnerships. Partnership officers leveraged the trust built through neutrality to creatively explore different opportunities and combinations for the partners to achieve maximum benefit.

Non-exclusivity allowed partnership officers to work with partners in the same industry, even direct competitors. To demonstrate, Mike worked with both Soda Inc. and BeverageCo on a recycling project. As the recycling project continued to scale up to additional countries, the team identified a need for additional corporate partners. The need for additional private sector partners was a key challenge. Mike said, “We’ve been struggling on how to incorporate other industry players. It has been tough.” The project team looked to Mike to help them find additional corporate partners to join the project.

Mike focused on finding companies that had an interest in recycling, along with objectives that aligned with the other partners on the project. An immediate potential partnership pool was IDB’s current corporate partners. One potential partner for the project was BeverageCo. Mike managed the relationship with BeverageCo and had a strong relationship with representatives at the company. More importantly, BeverageCo had been working with the MIF operational department on several recycling projects in Latin America since 2010. The MIF operational department thought BeverageCo could immediately add value as a partner on the project. There was resistance initially, however, during the team’s early discussions about inviting BeverageCo to join the project. Despite the synergies of both Soda Inc. and BeverageCo working on recycling projects in Latin America, Soda Inc. did not want to invite BeverageCo to join the project. Mike explained the challenge of getting two competitors to work on the same project with IDB,
Anything that has BeverageCo and Soda Inc. are in the same in press release or activity or announcement or whatever, needs to be approved by both corporations; up the chain, legal, marketing. BeverageCo is more open minded. Soda Inc. is more closed.

Focal points from Soda Inc. in the marketing department were particularly conscious about protecting the company’s brand and cautious about working with a competitor. Mike kept the dialogue open with both companies about the project. Both companies wanted to take responsibly address waste from their products through recycling. At the same time, both companies faced challenges securing adequate amounts of plastic in their factories in Latin America. After several months, both Soda Inc. and BeverageCo expressed interest in working together on the project. Mike said, “It was funny because they said, ‘We are competitors, but not enemies. I applauded them.” He focused on aligning interests and keeping the focus on a shared group interests. Although the companies decided to work together on a project, Mike knew he would have to continue facilitating dialogue and meetings to integrate BeverageCo into the project team and reinforce his neutral role as the two competitors worked with each other.

Furthermore, partnership officers worked non-exclusively with multiple departments in the mango value chain project with Soda Inc. Partnership officers Matthew and Mary had exploratory conversations with multiple departments as the project idea was being developed to gauge alignment. Ben, the manager of the partnership office, reflected on the project. He explained this approach of talking with multiple operational departments about the project idea. He said,

We have to be super neutral in our approach…Internal neutrality is more important because the moment I favor department X over department Y because I have a friend or I’m perceived closer to this one, then you start to be in trouble. You have to be very careful with that…And sometimes we could err on inviting more in the beginning, but we’d rather present to three instead of just inviting one [internal] potential partner. Sometimes we’re very surprised because the department that we thought could be the best partner for this sometimes may not be. It could be the other because of a specific
project they were developing that we didn’t know about. It could be closer to what this company was doing. So we better err on the side that is open for everybody.

There was interest in the project from multiple operational departments. The partnership officers found there was some tension around which operational department would own the project. By facilitating strategic conversations, the partnership officers found that the project better aligned with the strategy of one operational department, which had greater familiarity with working with private sector partners and the direct technical expertise related to the project.

During project design and implementation, partnership officers maintained operational neutrality. Operational department teams took the lead on all technical and operational aspects of the project. Ben explained,

The owner should be the operational team, and if they are not the owners, I say it’s our fault because then it doesn't fly… So I don't want to start any competition. The experts are there. The operational guys are there. We are here to provide support to them.

Partnership officers focused their attention on the relational, rather than the technical, work on projects. For instance, in Val’s work on the sustainable cities project, the operational department expert viewed her operational neutrality as positive,

Partnership officers don't get into technical things. They don't have an opinion about the technical things. I mean, for opinions they have to ask [the operational department experts]. And that is a great thing…We have the technical say in all this, and I think that's the way things should work…They lead the process, and they guide us through this [partnership] initiative labyrinth.

Partnership officers attended to relational and political interactions that operational departments did not want to deal with or have the expertise to navigate. Mary explained, “That allows them to focus in what they need. Basically, what they focus on is the project, and I think that basically increase the comfort zone for them.” Without the additional responsibility to handle relational aspects of projects, operational department experts focused on leveraging their expertise for new approaches to development in project work.
For example, in Matthew’s work with Soda Inc., he clearly delineated relational and operational work. He was cognizant of the potential competition that could occur:

The tactics there is basically, we would all agree here is that we are not the experts. That we should have very clear in our minds. We do not pretend to be one, and we do not compete with the experts, even if we know about the subject matter…But even knowing that, you can ask some questions in the meetings that show that you’re technical but you have to look like you’re not competing because we’re servicing the rest of the units. It’s not a written directive really, but it is sort of in a sense that we try not to get into anyone’s field.

Partnership officers felt as if they were doing their jobs well when the operational department and partner project team took full credit for implementation success. Ben explained,

Now this is something I emphasize to everyone: we shouldn't be the stars, the stars here are, for it to work, are the partner and our internal client, the one we're supporting. They should be the stars. We should be in the background supporting, making these two happy. The moment we become the stars, our internal guys will feel jipped about that, and we wouldn't be effective. So we're supporting them, so we should be very humble. Our role is to be, although we think it’s very important function, less as a protagonist, in that sense.

The moment they feel that they did it or they did the whole thing or they got exposure or they got credit, you gain an internal partner forever...For the next project, they trust you. They say ‘this guy came here and supported me. He won’t steal the show. I want to do more of that.’

By not stepping on the operational and technical turf of operational departments, partnership officers strengthened the relationships they had with operational departments. This approach helped to build trust over time as they continued to work with the same operational teams. Since partnership officers’ performance was measured on the quality of interaction between operational departments, rather than the outcome of the project, they were rewarded for taking a supporting role.

Ben recalled his experience with several early partnership officers when the partnership office was first established and before he built the current partnership officer team. There were several partnership officers who did not maintain operational neutrality. These partnership
officers had strong operational and technical expertise and exerted this knowledge in interactions with operational departments during partnership work. In addition, these early partnership officers brought their biases about various partners. This approach created conflict between partnership officers and operational department experts. Ben said,

I didn't like the fighting I saw that went on because some of them came with a lot of connections, but with a lot of biases on how things work. So a lot crashing internally. A lack of understanding. Very strong opinions and ideas about foundations or this or that or NGOs or the US. A lack of openness about private sector partners, for instance.

This perspective caused problems with partnership officers’ ability to effectively gain buy in and secure resources from operational departments for partnership activities.

Due to the importance of neutrality, Ben had strict hiring standards when he evaluated individuals for the partnership officer role. After these early instances of partnership officers clashing with operational departments, Ben focused on a different profile for partnership officers. Given Ben’s experience working within IDB and his knowledge of the culture, he knew partnership officers needed to be neutral to navigate the organization. He found that well connected, more experienced individuals tended to have more ego and wanted to take ownership of projects and initiatives. Instead of hiring individuals with developed networks with high level officials and executives from the public and private sectors, he hired partnership officers mostly in their late 20s and 30s with graduate degrees. He discovered these individuals were coachable and eager to learn, which were important characteristics in the profile of partnership officers who successfully navigated and supported diverse actors for partnership work.

In the maintaining a neutral stance practice, partnership officers remained impartial among partners and did not engage in the operational elements of projects. This stance allowed partnership officers to build trust with collaborators and move across levels and boundaries to facilitate collective action.
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<th>Table 4.2 Facilitative Boundary Leadership Practices by Corporate Partner</th>
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<td><strong>Beverage Co</strong></td>
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<td>“[I ask questions] like ‘What are the goals?’…That’s why working with this office is a challenge because you really need to understand what are the issues that your partners face…I need to know what are your challenges because in that sense I can tell if we can be partners or not.” (Mike-Partnership Officer)</td>
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<td><strong>Soda Inc.</strong></td>
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<td>“For example, one limitation is that with our funds…Those types of things, it’s more like a project level. We coordinated all the time between ORP and our unit.” (Martha-Operational)</td>
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</table>

Table 4.2 (Continued) Facilitative Boundary Leadership Practices by Corporate Partner
Table 4.2 (Continued) Facilitative Boundary Leadership Practices by Corporate Partner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversified Tech</th>
<th>Data sources: PO, CP, O</th>
<th>Data sources: PO, CP</th>
<th>Data sources: PO, OD, CP</th>
<th>Data sources: PO, CP, A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I said, You know what we need? A demonstration for them. Let's have this study that is going to be ready in January, and then let me share it with them [the operational department]. Let's meet with them and share these. [I’ll tell them] ‘This is what we've done for...” (Val-Partnership Office)</td>
<td>“That's why it's a little bit challenging, because Nate is not the technical person. I mean, Nate has a good way of getting the right people...With Nate it took a lot of effort.” (Val-Partnership Office)</td>
<td>“‘For internal, political reasons, it’s a way of showing, OK, yeah, we made the quota or we didn’t make the quota because of one big deal or whatever, but this is what we are doing to drive the business over the medium-term is we're working on all these different...” (Val-Partnership Office)</td>
<td>“We're not going to sit down and say to Howard, ‘No we need to do this because this is very important for the bank.’ When he is a technical expert, he tells me this is not good. This is not up to standard for the cities, etc. This is not my call.” (Val-Partnership Officer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 (Continued) Facilitative Boundary Leadership Practices by Corporate Partner

| Cities. Why don’t we do something similar for you that we know is going to be helpful for you? We need to engage more cooperation with the private sector.”” (Val- Partnership Office) | relationships…This is why, and I have said this to them a couple of times, I need the MOU for internal reasons.”” (Nate-Corporate Partner) |

Note: PO=Partnership officer interview OD=Operational department expert interview; CP=Corporate partner interview; O=Observation: A=Archival documents

Table 4.3 Comparison of Corporate Partner Perceptions of Partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional lens of focal points</th>
<th>BeverageCo</th>
<th>Soda Inc.</th>
<th>BeerCo</th>
<th>FinTech</th>
<th>DiversifiedTech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong corporate social responsibility and sustainability strategy integrated with the core business</td>
<td>Project level corporate social responsibility strategy</td>
<td>Strong sustainable development strategy integrated with the core business</td>
<td>Strong international development strategy tied to the core business</td>
<td>Sales without a strong guiding business sustainability/CSR strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectation of benefits from partnership</td>
<td>Fulfillment of public commitments</td>
<td>Sales and reputational benefits</td>
<td>Sales and reputational benefits</td>
<td>Insight into new markets</td>
<td>Sales to IDB and IDB government clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced government relations</td>
<td>Fulfillment of public commitments</td>
<td>Enhanced government relations</td>
<td>Reputational benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 4.3 (Continued) Comparison of Corporate Partner Perceptions of Partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal orientation</th>
<th>Long term, strategic investment</th>
<th>Long term perspective for business and social impact</th>
<th>Long term perspective for business and social impact</th>
<th>Balance of short term and long term to appeal to different stakeholders</th>
<th>Short term for sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**SUMMARY**

This chapter introduced four facilitative boundary practices the partnership officers used in their work with operational departments and corporate partners. Through these practices — aligning objectives, curating interactions across boundaries, maintaining a neutral stance and establishing a collaborative structure — partnership officers fostered teaming across organization, sector and sector boundaries throughout the lifecycle of projects with partners. By taking a comparative approach, I showed how the enactment of the practices unfolded across corporate partners and operational department collaborations. Differences in how collaborators perceived partnerships gave rise to different demands and challenges for partnership officers. These findings suggest that collaborators’ perspectives about the partnership in terms of openness to working with other actors, single or dual social/business lens and view of interdependence for collective impact influence partnership officers’ ability to enact facilitative leadership practices to facilitate and guide partnerships through multiple successful temporary projects; thus, impacting interactions across boundaries and project design and implementation.
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

As teams navigate changing environmental and organizational dynamics, boundary spanning is increasingly a key component. This dissertation introduces the construct of facilitative boundary leadership and shows how partnership officers utilized practices to enable collaboration across diverse actors. The findings suggest that boundary spanners, such as partnership officers, use four practices to foster collaboration. Partnership officers aligned objectives by bringing together diverse actors for exploratory dialogue and finding areas of mutual interest. Through promoting understanding and educating, partnership officers eased tensions by curating interactions across boundaries. By maintaining a neutral stance, partnership officers built trust and moved across levels and boundaries. Finally, they established collaborative structures to outline ground rules and roles for interactions and work throughout the collaboration lifecycle.

This dissertation seeks to explain how boundary spanners foster collaboration among diverse actors. The findings illuminate the micro-mechanisms of collaboration across organization, sector and expertise boundaries. The findings from this project contribute three literatures: boundary spanning, cross-sector collaboration and leadership. This research lays a foundation for future work in this area. Also, findings from this dissertation have practical implications for understanding and improving the effectiveness of boundary spanning in complex, multi-organizational contexts.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

My findings have implications for research on boundary spanning. Previous research has primarily focused on the individual and group processes associated with crossing one visible or
symbolic boundary at a time, which has been at the expense of a richer understanding of social dynamics across collaborators. In complex settings, collaborators typically cross multiple boundaries simultaneously. My findings suggest that a third party, such a partnership officer, dedicated to developing and fostering collaboration can help collaborators address and overcome the challenges associated with collaborating across boundaries. However, it is not simply the existence of a third party; rather, how partnership officers managed collaborators through the enactment of all four practices distinguishes the present study. This study complements the emerging research that shifts the unit of analysis of team work to the system level, introducing a path to examine how teams from different organizations come together to perform as a system of teams (DeChurch & Zaccaro, 2010; Mathieu, Marks, & Zaccaro, 2001).

Findings from this dissertation also have implications for the cross-sector collaboration research. Prior work on intermediaries in the cross-sector collaboration literature has conceptualized these individuals or organizations primarily as brokers. Yet, this research suggests that although partnership officers perform brokering activities early in the collaboration, the scope of the practices to foster collaboration is far wider. This research illuminates the broader practices of partnership officers through attention to their role at different points during the life cycle of partnerships.

Much of the previous research views cross-sector collaborations as an organizational form that has primarily social goals (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011; Selsky & Parker, 2010). Yet, recent work on hybrid organizing has unlocked the potential of combining multiple aspects of organizational forms to pursue both social and commercial activities (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Battilana & Dorado, 2010). This research sheds light on how facilitative boundary leadership
practices can create a social and structural setting for mutual gain where partners can pursue both social and business aims by organizing within cross-sector collaborations.

Finally, this dissertation contributes to the research on leadership. The extant mainstream leadership literature has had little to say about effective leadership across multiple boundaries. In addition, much of the previous work focuses on leadership traits and styles at the expense of a rich understanding of leadership practices. Scholars have made numerous calls for research on new forms of leadership that have emerged to address recent economic and social changes (Crosby & Bryson, 2010; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Waddock, 2014). My findings detail how partnership officers led across multiple collaborations that involved groups from different organizations. Furthermore, these findings articulate partnership officers’ leadership practices in response to multiple challenges that arose at various points during the project lifecycle. This research suggests that a facilitative, neutral leadership style can enable collaboration in complex contexts with collaborators from multiple organizations and sectors.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This research offers managerial implications for boundary spanners in complex, multi-organizational collaborations. The findings suggest that organizations can institutionalize their partnership work by establishing a dedicated partnership unit staffed with skilled boundary spanners. To institutionalize partnership work, top management support, along with supportive and empowering policies to centralize partnership activities within a dedicated unit, can provide a strong foundation for boundary spanners to do their work. My research also suggests that partnership work can be enhanced through what two of my interview participants called “parallel structure.” In this instance, both IDB and the corporate partner had highly experienced individuals representing their organizations from a dedicated partnership unit. This structure
eased some of the typical challenges communicating and moving projects forward that were
typically encountered with partners that did not have a dedicated partnership unit.

This research suggests that boundary spanners crossing multiple boundaries need adequate support from senior management. All of the partnership officers I interviewed shared the challenge they face with dealing many demands and competing priorities from internal operational departments and corporate partners within their partnership portfolio, along with the demands from a host of other stakeholders. This research implies that senior managers should provide resources and incentives to partnership officers to prevent burnout from the demands of the job.

Finally, this research illuminates the work of an emerging partnership profession. Career paths for these individuals are undefined due to the profession’s novelty (Rogers, 2015). Opportunities for partnership professionals are growing as corporations, NGOs, foundations, governmental agencies and development agencies develop dedicated partnership units or departments with staff exclusively devoted to boundary spanning to develop partnerships and manage external stakeholder relationships (Hundal, 2014). Training and development of these professionals is of interest because facilitative boundary leadership differs from traditional top-down leadership. Developing leaders who can work across multiple boundaries involves specialized knowledge and requires adaptation for various contexts.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study provides insights on crossing multiple boundaries in collaboration; however, it has several limitations that future research can address. As a single case study, this research provides an analysis of the complex social processes of collaborations with partnership officers employed within one organization, but this method has limitations in terms of generalizability.
These findings are suggestive of facilitative boundary leadership practices in complex partnerships that can be explored in future research. I induced my theory of facilitative boundary leadership within the context of a multi-lateral organization, which has a unique structural and bureaucratic setting. In addition, partnership projects were located in Latin America and the Caribbean. Embedded in this geographic context (Marquis & Battilana, 2009), partnership officers and collaborators operated in a particular institutional and cultural context. The operating context of several projects involved institutional voids (Khanna & Palepu, 2000) that presented unique challenges for collaborators and partnership officers. Future research can examine how facilitative boundary leadership practices vary in partnerships located in different institutional settings. In addition, future studies in different settings can utilize survey measures of facilitative boundary leadership practices in larger samples.

None of the projects I examined were completed at the time of the end of this study; thus, I did not have access to complete project outcome data. Nor did I have outcome data on partners across multiple projects since partnerships were ongoing and none had completed a full cycle of a typical 3-5 year term partnership agreement. Future studies can examine the impact of facilitate leadership practices on partnership and project outcomes. This research opportunity responds to a call for a greater understanding of the factors that lead to better outcomes in partnerships and how value is created for partners and beneficiaries (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, b). In addition, outcomes across multiple projects with the same partner could shed light on how partner interactions and partnership officers’ enactment of practices changes over time.

The influence of personal and professional histories of boundary spanners is an important individual level dimension for advancing knowledge on the enactment of boundary leadership practices. Given that partnership officers move across multiple social worlds, does previous
professional experience in multiple sectors help partnership officers translate and educate across boundaries in complex partnerships? Do tri-sector leaders (Lovegrove & Thomas, 2013) who have worked in public, private and nonprofit organizations make more effective boundary spanners in cross-sector collaborations? What skill sets do these professionals need to facilitate successful collaborations?

A fruitful area for future research is an examination of facilitative boundary leadership in partnerships that include tri-sector collaboration, including partners such as development agencies, governments, NGOs, foundations and corporations. Although I had several examples of these tri-sector and multi-industry partnerships in my data set, I focused on projects that included IDB’s partnerships with corporations in this dissertation. These additional actors in a partnership increase the social worlds that boundary spanners must cross, intensifying the institutional complexity of the collaboration (Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011). Also, these actors bring different resources to projects. Accordingly, these tri-sector partnerships could be viewed from a resource dependency perspective (Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009). Does the type of resources involved in the project create different opportunity and challenge structures for partnership officers?

**CONCLUSION**

I return to the quote from partnership officer David at the beginning of this dissertation. David’s comments alluded to the misconception that collaboration is simply about networking and making friends. Collaborating with diverse actors with the objective to combine resources and knowledge in a unique ways is very challenging. Despite these challenges, there are growing opportunities for different organizations to come together to work on complex issues that have
social and economic impact. In this research, I provide insight into how individuals like David can improve the effectiveness of collaboration in complex, multi-organizational contexts.
APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDES

Partnership Officer Interview Guide

Part A: Introduction

- To start, perhaps you could tell me about your individual background in the organization. How did you come to this type of work more generally (work experience, educational background, etc.), and this particular position, more specifically? Can you tell me about your current role in the organization (key responsibilities and activities)?

- Can you describe what a typical work day looks like?

Part B: Creation and Development of ORP

- Can you tell me a little about how ORP was started, and how it developed?
  - Probe: What changes had to be made within IDB, in terms of a) culture, b) structure and c) process?
  - Probe: What challenges did you face?
  - Probe: How did ORP fit into the realignment strategy?

- How would you describe the work of ORP?

- How aware are other office of what ORP does? If they are aware, how do they receive this information?

Part C: Partnerships

Process

- Can you walk me through the partnering process life cycle?
  - Probe: Can you describe the process by which ORP begins to work with a potential partner? How does ORP find partners?
  - Probe: Describe the types of partnership opportunities and partnership structures (lending, grant making, specific development funds managed by IDB and knowledge sharing).
  - Probe: Tell me about how MOUs come about. What types of conversations or activities come before you have a finalized MOU?

- Can you walk me through what that interaction looks like at different points in the partnering process by using a recent partnership an as example?
  - Probe: What types of partnering activities involve internal units?
  - Probe: How do you encourage IDB staff to pursue partnerships?

- Have you made any changes in the partnership process? If so, what was the source or impetus for the change?
Does your approach vary based on the partner you’re working with? How? Why? Please give specific examples illustrating differences or similarities.

How do you track what’s going on with the different partnerships? Are there technological tools that you use to track or communicate with partners? Can you describe how you used the tools during a recent partnership?
  o Probes: Tell me about the CRM tool. What information do you keep in the tool? How many active partner accounts do you have? What types of things do you keep track of at different points in the project lifecycle?
  o Probe: Can you tell me about the collaboration platform portal for partners?
  o Probe: Do you see any shortcoming to these tools that make it difficult or awkward to collaborate remotely?

Does the ORP team meet to discuss partnerships? What does the group talk about? How do you offer support to each other? Can you give me an example?

What does the President do to support the work of ORP? Does ORP have the support of other executives? Can you think of a time when this happened?

Successes and Challenges with Partnering
  • Can you describe a time when a partnership worked really worked well?
    o Probes: What was at stake? What was decided? What decisions were particularly effective? Can you describe the process? Can you describe the nature of the discussions? Who participated in these conversations? How was a resolution reached? Where did the resources from the project come from? Was there a power imbalance?

  • Can you tell me about a time when ORP maximized a partnership from all angles?

  • Can you recall a time when you felt a partnership didn’t operate well or failed to achieve your desired outcome?
    o Probes: What was at stake? What was decided? Can you describe the process? Can you describe the nature of the discussions? Who participated in these conversations? How was a resolution reached? Where did the resources from the project come from? Was there a power imbalance?
    o Probe: Did this episode remind you of other events or experiences? Were you able to draw on prior experiences to resolve this problem?
    o Probe: Walk me through the IDB/BeverageCo partnership. (BeverageCo promoted soft drinks that clearly contribute to obesity, which is a major issue in LAC that IDB attempts to address.)

  • Can you tell me about a time when you had difficulty coordinating the work a) between internal units, b) between internal units and partners and c) across partners?
    o Probe: Did an outcome emerge smoothly in a linear fashion or did you have to revisit discussions or activities?
Probe: What do you see as the key contributing factor to resolving this challenge? Do you believe this was the best possible outcome for IDB? For the partner?

- Please give an example(s) of where a discussion or an intervention really changed the course of a partnership.

- Can you tell me about a time when there were differences in opinion in a partnership? How was this handled? What was the role of ORP?

- Think about the last couple of partnerships you’ve worked on. If you were to select one or two phrases, how do you think your partners would describe IDB? Why?

- How is performance measured in partnerships? How are improvements or changes made?

- How does your background in XX influence your work in partnerships? Please give specific examples.

- Are there any other issues that you would like to bring up regarding the nature of collaboration within IDB or with partners based on your experience? Or about the challenges of managing and leading these collaborations?

**Part D: Innovation**

- Have partnerships introduced any new areas of work for IDB? Can you tell me about a time when that happened? What role did ORP play with bringing these new areas to IDB?
  - Probe: Impact investing, for example

- Can you tell me about some of the pilot projects or programs that you worked on with partners that were scaled up?

- Can you think of a partnership where the partners and IDB learned a great deal from each other? What happened? What role did ORP play?

**Replication**

- Can you tell me about some of the efforts ORP has taken to replicate the partnership structure in other organizations?
  - Probe: Tell me more about the strategic alliance training seminars ORP held in 2012 with Rio de Janeiro’s Secretary of Sports for the 2014 and 2016 sports events. What types of things do you cover in the seminar?

- What other organizations have you taught about partnering? Have you continued your relationships with these organizations?

**Part E: Management & Intrapersonal Dynamics**

- (For ORP senior members/managers) What criteria do you use to recruit your staff (senior and junior members)?
• (For ORP junior members) Can you tell me about the ORP manager’s management style?

• Can you tell me about a time when you’ve faced a challenge in your role?
  o Probe: Who did you reach out to for help?
  o Probe: What continues to motivate you to do this job?

Part X: Challenges and Opportunities
• Broadly speaking, what are some of the biggest challenges the organization faces? What do you think is the biggest challenge for the organization moving forward with working with partners?

• If you could change anything about the partnering process, what would it be?
  o Probe: Are there any major barriers to collaboration and knowledge sharing within IDB or with partners? An example? What might be done to eliminate some of these barriers?

• In general, how do you think the organization perceives the partnership work? Do you think your office is getting better at partnering? Why do you think so? Are there possibilities for improvement?

Part F. Wrap Up
• To end, is there anything that I haven’t asked that you think is important?
Operational Department Expert Interview Guide

Part A: Introduction
- To start, perhaps you could tell me about your individual background in the organization. How did you come to this type of work more generally (work experience, educational background, etc.), and this particular position, more specifically? Can you tell me about your current role in the organization (key responsibilities and activities)?
- Could you describe the work of your team/unit/department?

Part B: Interaction with ORP & Partnerships
Perception of ORP
- Were you around when ORP was created? If so, can you tell me about how it developed? Did your work or activities change after ORP’s creation? Do you have specific examples?
- How would you describe the work that ORP does?

Process
- Think about a partnership you are currently working on or worked on recently (or recent interactions with ORP). Could you walk me through the process of bringing this partnership or project from the beginning to completion? I’m especially interested in the specific decisions that were made during the process and who was involved?
  - Probe: How did you begin working with this partner?
  - Probe: Who was involved? Why do you approach them?
  - Probe: What role did ORP play?
  - Probe: How often and by what means (emails, meetings, reports, activities) did you communicate with ORP? With the partner?
  - Probe: If you were to select one or two phrases, how do you think this partner would describe IDB?

- Are there technological tools that you use to track or communicate with partners? Do you use any of ORP’s tracking systems (CRM, partnership portal)? Can you describe how you used the tools during a recent partnership?
  - Probe: Do you see any shortcoming to these tools that make it difficult or awkward to collaborate remotely?

- Do you meet with an ORP representative to discuss partnerships? What does the group talk about? Can you give me an example?

Successes and Challenges with Partnering
- Can you describe a time when a partnership worked really worked well?
  - Probe: Can you describe the process?
  - Probe: What decisions were particularly effective? What was decided? What was at stake?
o Probe: Can you describe the nature of the discussions? Who participated in these conversations? How was a resolution reached?

o Probe: Where did the resources from the project come from? Was there a power imbalance?

• Can you recall a time when you felt a partnership didn’t operate well or failed to achieve your desired outcome?
  o Probe: Can you describe the process?
  o Probe: What decisions were particularly effective? What was decided? What was at stake?
  o Probe: Can you describe the nature of the discussions? Who participated in these conversations? How was a resolution reached?
  o Probe: Where did the resources from the project come from? Was there a power imbalance?
  o Probes: In what ways was the partnership challenging (personal, interpersonal, technical, etc.)?

• Can you tell me about a time when you encountered a challenge with coordinating with the partner?
  o Probe: Did an outcome emerge smoothly in a linear fashion or did you have to revisit discussions or activities?
  o Probe: What do you see as the key contributing factor to resolving this challenge? Do you believe this was the best possible outcome for IDB? For the partner?

• Can you tell me about a time when there were differences in opinion in a partnership? How was this handled? What was the role of ORP?

• What measures are important for your office in evaluating the partnership? How are improvements or changes made?

• Are there any other issues that you would like to bring up regarding the nature of collaboration within IDB or with partners based on your experience? Or about the challenges of managing and leading these collaborations?

Part C: Innovation

• Have partnerships introduced any new areas of work for your office? Can you tell me about a time when that happened? What role did ORP play?

• Can you tell me about some of the pilot projects or programs that you worked on with partners that were scaled up?

• Can you think of a partnership where the partners and IDB learned a great deal from each other? What happened? What role did ORP play?
Part D: Challenges and Opportunities

- Broadly speaking, what are some of the biggest challenges the organization faces? What do you think is the biggest challenge for the organization moving forward with working with partners?

- If you could change anything about the partnering process, what would it be?
  - Probe: Are there any major barriers to collaboration and knowledge sharing within IDB or with partners? An example? What might be done to eliminate some of these barriers?

- In general, how do you think the organization perceives the partnership work? Do you think your office is getting better at partnering? Why do you think so? Are there possibilities for improvement?

- How does your background in XX influence your work in partnerships? Please give specific examples.

Part E. Wrap Up

- To end, is there anything that I haven’t asked that you think is important?
REFERENCES


