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How broker organizations can facilitate public–private partnerships for development

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Summary Broker organizations increasingly facilitate the partnering process of public–private partnerships (PPPs) for development. In this paper, we argue that their function goes beyond simply match-making between partners and develop a theoretical framework for the broker organizations' roles throughout the PPP life cycle. Research on 19 broker organizations shows that these organizations act in the roles of convener, mediator, and learning catalyst. We analyze how and why they can facilitate the partnering process through these roles and discuss the research findings in the light of the social capital, collaboration, and inter-organizational learning literatures. The discussion highlights the benefits of broker organizations in the partnering process of PPPs and how those organizations' roles can best be performed.

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Introduction

In view of the complex problems faced by humanity, including climate change, poverty, and inadequate public services, public–private partnerships (PPPs) for development have come to be seen as the “collaboration paradigm of the 21st century” (Austin, 2000, p. 44). Indeed, these partnerships between private, public, and civil-society organizations can offer benefits to every partner, as well as communities (McQuaid, 2000; Waddock, 1988). However, PPPs are not simple ventures and the potential benefits of the collaborative approach are often jeopardized by challenges hampering the partnering process (Huxham & Vangen, 2000). Such challenges, which stem, for example, from the cross-sectoral nature of this type of collaboration, the partners' limited experience, poor governance, and

complex settings (Kolk, van Tulder, & Kostwinder, 2008), provide a *raison d'être* for broker organizations that intend to facilitate the partnering process. In recent years, organizations specializing in facilitating partnerships have flourished and become increasingly important (World Economic Forum, 2005). Likewise, organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and many development agencies have shifted their agenda towards facilitating PPPs for development (Googins & Rochlin, 2000).

In this article, broker organizations for PPPs are defined as organizations that have specific experience and capacity to build and/or facilitate PPPs. More precisely, they are third parties that facilitate negotiation on and the development of PPP arrangements and help research, maintain, monitor, review, and evaluate PPPs over time.¹

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¹ Based on the Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme (www.partnershipbrokers.org).

Although scholars acknowledge the importance of broker organizations in facilitating the partnership process (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Googins & Rochlin, 2000), research has not addressed the question of how such facilitation is achieved. Consequently, our goal is to explore how broker organizations facilitate the partnering process and develop a framework for the roles they play.

The term “broker” is widely used in the social networking literature for characterizing an actor which connects otherwise unconnected contacts (Burt, 1992). In the absence of a link between two actors (i.e. a structural hole) which are both linked to a third actor, the latter enjoys preferential access to information and can use its brokering position to span these structural holes (Burt, 1992). In this regard, brokerage is a process “by which intermediary actors facilitate transactions between other actors lacking access or trust in one another” (Marsden, 1982, p. 202). In the context of PPPs for development, a distinction is made between internal and external brokers (Tennyson, 2005). Internal brokers, also known as boundary spanners (Williams, 2002), are managers from a partner organization that promote the partnership. External brokers are independent professionals mandated to facilitate the partnership. This paper focuses on the latter. We argue that broker organizations can facilitate PPPs in situations in which the partners – businesses, governments, and civil-society organizations – lack access to cross-sectoral networks, trusting relationships, and experience with PPPs for development. Compared to individual brokers, their organizational capacities, including such elements as specialized staff and processes, a large network, a solid reputation, and knowledge-management systems, allow them to offer more substantial support to the partners than a single person can.

In the literature on collaboration, Gray (1989) is one of the first to provide valuable insights into the early steps a broker organization can undertake in a PPP's life cycle. She finds that by identifying and bringing to the table all legitimate stakeholders, some organizations function as conveners for a partnership approach. Wood and Gray (1991) expand these initial insights and illustrate four different forms of authority a convener may use to identify and persuade stakeholders to participate. They conclude that more research is needed on the “functions of these convener modes and their effects on collaboration processes” (1991, p. 153). This call, however, has so far received only limited research attention. A systematic review of works building on Wood and Gray (1991) showed that scholars acknowledge the importance of a convener to bring partners together, guide the partnership design, and ensure that all parties benefit (Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve, & Tsai, 2004; Lackey, Freshwater, & Rupasingha, 2002; Legler & Reischl, 2003; Sharma & Kearins, 2011) but do not draw full research attention to the convener role. A valuable exception is the contribution by Dyer and Nobeoka (2000), who describe how Toyota, as a convener, built its US knowledge-sharing network and interpret it in the light of network ties.

A recent study on foundations as brokers (Von Schnurbein, 2010) helps further develop our understanding of the convener role. The author analyzes this role using social capital theory while distinguishing between bonding and bridging social capital. Social capital is defined as a set of resources such as trust, norms, and values (Coleman, 1990) that are

accessed through the network of social relations and can be mobilized to facilitate action (Adler & Kwon, 2002). In this context, bonding social capital stems from strong social ties embedded in sound relationships and shared norms among members of a closed network (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Closed networks facilitate the creation of trust as norms can be more easily developed and controlled (Coleman, 1990). Based on trust, open communication, and information sharing, strong ties facilitate the cooperation and coordination of joint activities (Coleman, 1990).

While the bonding views focus on a group's internal characteristics, the bridging views emphasize social capital as a resource located in the external linkages of a focal actor (Adler & Kwon, 2002). By bridging structural holes between different groups, actors can provide access to new contacts and resources (Burt, 1992). Thus, these boundary-spanning linkages to actors outside a focal group can make new information and resources accessible (Granovetter, 1973). Von Schnurbein's (2010) analysis shows that foundations are especially useful in building bridging social capital by spanning structural holes between different actors. Indeed, the foundation analyzed brought together the partners to start the project, regularly provided them with information, and organized events to allow them to reconnect. Furthermore, the foundation motivated partner commitment through the principles of altruism, credibility, and voluntary work. Von Schnurbein (2010) concludes that more research is needed to analyze a broker's role in the light of social capital. He suggests a research design covering a broader sample, as well as exploring whether brokers can also promote bonding social capital and how this is interlinked with bridging social capital.

Following this call, we argue that a broker organization's role goes beyond simply match-making between different actors and providing bridging ties. Consequently, we seek to explore what roles these organizations adopt to facilitate the partnering process throughout the entire PPP life cycle and how they do so. Overall, the purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework that expands existing insights into broker organizations' roles which, so far, center on a convening role in the early PPP phases. In view of this purpose, our paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we discuss the partnering process in PPPs for development, inherent challenges, and the potential need for external facilitation. We then explain our methodology to explore different broker roles and give two practical illustrations. In “The broker organizations' role” section, we present our results and integrate them into a conceptual framework. We discuss the findings in the “Discussion” section in the light of the social capital and inter-organizational learning literatures. We then discuss the implications for the successful performance of the broker organizations' roles and the conditions under which these roles are particularly helpful for the partners.

The partnering process in PPPs for development and the need for broker organizations

Since the 1992 Rio Summit and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, PPPs have been

considered important instruments for addressing complex public problems and enhancing development (Kolk et al., 2008). These partnerships foster collaboration between businesses, government, and sometimes non-profit organizations in projects in which risks, resource contributions, and skills are shared and which aim to benefit each partner as well as the community (based on McQuaid (2000) and Waddock (1988)). Bringing together different sector-specific resources, expertise, and capacities, PPPs have the potential to realize “collaborative advantage” (Huxham & Vangen, 1996, p. 22) and reduce the unintended consequences of narrowly defined, one-sided solutions (Keast, Mandell, Brown, & Woolcock, 2004). However, throughout the PPP’s life cycle the partners encounter various challenges that may lead to “collaborative inertia” (Huxham & Vangen, 2000, pp. 772–773).

In the first phase of a PPP’s life cycle, the *problem-setting phase*, PPP initiators identify potential stakeholders and the resources needed to tackle the problem in question and convene them to discuss and agree on a common definition for the problem (Gray, 1989). Often, the partnership approach is viewed with scepticism and actors are not aware of overlapping responsibility across sectors (World Economic Forum, 2005). To assemble all relevant stakeholders, a convener may use different forms of authority and take on a proactive or responsive approach (Wood & Gray, 1991). First, stakeholders can deliberately seek a convener that is perceived to be fair due to its formal authority and legitimacy. Wood and Gray describe this as “*legitimation*.” Second, stakeholders may request a convener due to its informal authority (i.e. knowledge, credibility, and influence). In this form of “*facilitation*,” the convener’s central attribute is trustworthiness. Conversely, a convener may also initiate a partnership: either by “*mandate*” if the organization has formal authority and control over resources, or by persuading stakeholders to participate in a partnership (“*persuasion*”) and using its informal authority (Wood & Gray, 1991). However, the convener activities demand significant efforts. Particularly in developing countries, public partners often face resource constraints that limit their convening capacity. The private partner, on the other hand, may not have the development knowledge and connections to identify stakeholders, or the legitimacy to convene them (Kolk et al., 2008). Sectoral differences and suspicion often hamper the initial attempts to convene partners for a PPP. For example, round tables initiated by private-sector actors run the risk of being perceived as lobbying events (Tennyson, 2003).

During the next, *direction-setting phase*, partners establish shared ground rules, draw up an agenda, design the PPP, and try to reach an agreement (Gray, 1989). In view of the diverging goals that partners bring to the table, agreeing on a common approach frequently proves difficult (Tennyson, 2003). In addition, assigning rights and responsibilities is a tricky task and may lead to long decision-making processes due to a lack of adequate regulatory mechanisms and clear hierarchical structures (Klijn & Teisman, 2003). In this context, Bardach (1998) highlights the benefits of a mediator’s facilitation work in the negotiation process. More precisely, a mediator can help the partners exchange ideas while minimizing the dynamics of reactive devaluation; it can also induce parties to reveal information, foster a problem-

solving atmosphere, offset principal-agency problems, and serve as an educator and relationship-builder (Bardach, 1998). McEvily and Zaheer (2004) confirm this facilitation role and show that facilitators in geographical networks create trust among the network members by identifying shared interests, developing shared expectations, leveraging a critical mass of influence, and compressing networks in physical space and time.

During the *implementation phase*, partners coordinate their commitments and carry out the planned tasks (Gray, 1989). For cooperation to be successful, sound relationships and a shared working culture are considered important (Samii, Van Wassenhove, & Bhattacharya, 2002; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). However, the different partner backgrounds bring about different ways of working, accountabilities, and organizational cultures that may trigger misunderstandings and conflict (Tennyson, 2003). Negative sectoral characteristics (both actual and perceived) complicate PPP activities (Gray, 1989). The public sector may be perceived as bureaucratic and intransigent, the business sector as single-minded and pushy, and the civil-society sector as combative and territorial (Tennyson, 2003). The question arises of whether broker organizations can facilitate the development of sound relationships and a shared working culture as well as shifting partners out of collaborative inertia? An initial insight into this can be found in the strategic management literature: Dyer and Nobeoka (2000) study how Toyota built its US knowledge-sharing network as a convener and describe its evolution as occurring in phases from weak ties, to strong bilateral ties with Toyota, to strong multilateral ties among suppliers.

Finally, during the *review phase*, partners reflect on the PPP’s progress and decide either to sustain or end it. This review phase is not considered as the PPP’s final life cycle stage. Rather, partners might agree to review their partnership regularly in line with their milestone planning. Thus, the review phase might reveal changes in the partnership constellation or changes in the environment that call for adaptation. This leads to a cyclic process that, again, starts either by redefining the problem to be addressed or by reworking issues in the direction-setting phase. However, the evaluation of PPPs for development is complex and requires experience, since “traditional analytical frameworks, which presuppose a more ‘normal’ context for contractual arrangements, or a ‘moral’ obligation of actors to engage in activities seem not adequate” (Kolk et al., 2008, p. 270). Many partner organizations do not have experience with the PPP approach and lack the organizational capacity to assess the PPP and make suggestions for improvement (Klijn & Teisman, 2003). Contrary to this, broker organizations specialized in PPPs have valuable PPP experience. Consistent with the knowledge-based view, organizations get better at managing and undertaking a certain activity by accumulating and applying relevant knowledge and developing the necessary capabilities (Grant, 1996). The question therefore arises of whether and how broker organizations put their expertise in PPPs for development to the benefit of partner organizations involved in the partnership.

This overview shows that a convening and mediating role is discussed in the current literature with regard to facilitation in the problem- and direction-setting phases. However,

assuming that a broker organization's role goes beyond match-making in the early PPP phases, how do broker organizations adopt these roles throughout the entire PPP life cycle? Furthermore, do they facilitate the partnership process in further roles? A deeper analysis of their roles is important for a critical discussion of how they can perform these roles to facilitate the partnership process effectively and, in addition, to explore conditions under which the broker organizations' facilitation work proves particularly helpful for the partners.

Material and methods

In order to gain an initial understanding of how broker organizations facilitate PPPs, we analyzed two brokered partnerships in the area of education. For each PPP, we studied both internal documents and published material. Furthermore, we explored the stakeholders' viewpoints by conducting interviews with the broker organizations' staff members, corporate partners, public partners, and community members. Finally, the data were complemented by a field visit to a school that was the focus of one brokered PPP. Evidence from this preliminary study highlighted that both broker organizations were crucial in building and maintaining the PPPs, despite differences in focus and in the challenges they encountered.

We then began further analyzing how broker organizations facilitate PPPs and exploring their roles throughout the different PPP phases and the steps and challenges involved in their approach. A list of development actors (IBLF & WBCSD, 2004) served as a starting point for identifying relevant organizations. We removed those organizations that only supported PPPs financially or did not support them at all. On the basis of desk research and expert recommendations, we identified 29 organizations as facilitating PPPs for development. These organizations mainly operated with a global scope but varied in their legal form (ranging from NGOs and private organizations with membership structures to state-owned organizations) and their geographical presence.

On the subject of the broker organizations' approaches and services, we collected information from their websites and published documents such as case studies, program overviews, reports, and partnership guidelines. All the organizations identified were contacted and semi-structured interviews were realized with 25 key informants from 19 broker organizations (see Appendix). The number of conducted interviews per broker organization varied as interviews continued until the necessary information was collected. Employees of the broker organizations qualified

as interview partners if they had an overview of the services provided, had insights from the field, and were in contact with the partner organizations. Positions covering these criteria included, for example, directors, project managers, and private-sector engagement specialists.

Acknowledging that these interviews captured the perceptions of broker-organization staff and in order to mitigate bias, we added control interviews with partners involved in brokered PPPs. We selected the partner organizations according to published partnership descriptions. To avoid bias that would result from talking only to the broker organizations' preferred partners and to consider critical viewpoints too, we refrained from using a snowball sampling technique. Finally, we realized 33 partner interviews for 18 broker organizations in our sample (see Appendix). For two broker organizations, we could have discussions with partner organizations only per email and for one organization access to partners was impossible due to confidentiality reasons. Figure 1 illustrates the process of data collection and analysis.

The interviews with broker and partner organizations took about 40 min and were typewritten, and an executive summary was sent to the interviewees for approval. To analyze our data on emerging patterns of broker roles, we used coding as the key tool. The coding scheme of our two pre-studies became the initial one for subsequent data but we remained open to new, grounded codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Thereby, transcripts of the cases were analyzed continuously to refine the analysis and adjust data collection in subsequent cases as new themes emerged. We acknowledged that PPPs are dynamic projects and, consequently, matched the broker organizations' activities with the different PPP phases as described by Gray (1989). For each broker organization or program, a template structured according to the different PPP life cycle phases was filled in. The services offered and challenges encountered were then analyzed in the specific context of that particular broker organization. Following the approach of Eisenhardt (1989), we first analyzed the data of each broker organization separately and then searched for cross-case patterns.

Practical examples

Before discussing our findings on the different broker roles, we will present practical illustrations of how broker organizations get involved in PPPs. As PPPs are specific endeavors, the illustrations may give the readers an easy access to the topic and allow them to gain a firmer grasp of the concept of broker organizations. At the same time, they will allow us to draw attention to the differences we explored with regard

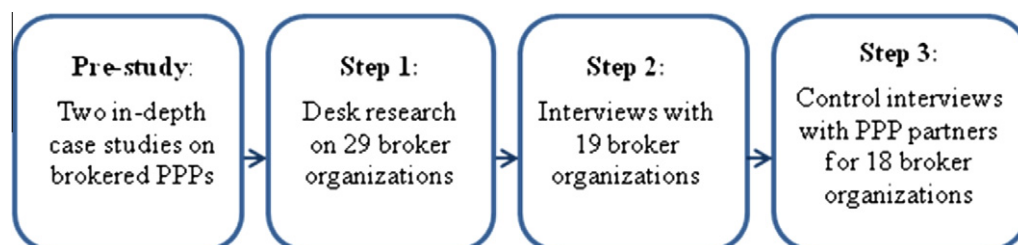


Figure 1 Process of data collection and analysis.

to a broker organization's entry point into the PPP's life cycle. Two different entry points can be matched to a distinction made in the convener literature between a convener who is mandated by the partners (i.e. the responsive approach) and one who initiates the PPP unilaterally (i.e. the proactive approach) (Wood & Gray, 1991).

In our sample, 14 organizations, mainly non-profit and United Nations entities, facilitate as early as the problem-setting phase. By creating a platform for the strategic discussion of a specific public problem, these broker organizations promote the founding of operational PPPs for development and help with their networks and partnership experience (see Example 1). These organizations promote

Example 1 The World Economic Forum and the Egyptian Education Initiative.

In 2003, the World Economic Forum (WEF) created the Global Education Initiative (GEI) to raise awareness and to support the implementation of sustainable and scalable national education-sector plans by catalyzing multi-stakeholder partnerships that also involve private-sector engagement. With the GEI, the WEF fosters the development of models and frameworks through primary research and by catalyzing hands-on country partnership initiatives.

Among the various country initiatives, the Egyptian Education Initiative (EEI) was launched in 2005 as a PPP between the Government of Egypt and the WEF's ICT community as a progressive model for reforming Egypt's education system. The WEF helped liaise between the partners and brought in PPP design expertise while leaving the partners enough freedom to set up their own, nationally-adapted strategy. During the implementation phase, the WEF was a member of the Executive Board and helped ensure EEI's governance. It asked for progress reports and was appreciated as an entity with which to discuss problems; it also offered assistance and connected the EEI with other initiatives, organizations, and learning events. "They were supporting us and calling for the achievement of the next milestones, for specific events, or for workshops" and "actually, they opened doors for the EEI to see the world and to be seen by others," as one EEI staff noted. Finally, the WEF promoted the development of evaluation capacities, for example, by convening a monitoring and evaluation task force meeting of several initiatives in Sharm El Sheikh. The WEF slowly withdrew from the EEI in 2009 but shared the lessons learnt of this PPP across the global initiative.

the building and successful implementation of partnerships from a third-party perspective and see themselves as not bound by national or specific political interests. Seven of these broker organizations developed sophisticated programs specialized in a specific problem domain² (e.g.,

² The programs are, for example, the "Cluster Program" (UNIDO), the "Health in Your Hands" (World Bank Health), the "Global Education Initiative" (WEF), the "HER Program" (BSR), "Partners in Leadership" (SchuleWirtschaft), "School Partnerships" (Madrasati), and "Business in Class" (BITC).

health, education, or regional development) and seek to catalyze a series of PPPs with the same design.

Five organizations in our sample, mostly state-owned development agencies, are commonly mandated in the direction-setting phase and focus on the successful implementation of selected PPPs. Partners must apply for a program and, once the proposal is reviewed and accepted, these broker organizations facilitate the PPP for a defined period (see Example 2).

Example 2 GTZ Strategic Alliances.

The German Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) offers a PPP program for business-led development projects. Companies can submit a project proposal that is then checked for compliance with specific criteria (e.g., a supra-regional focus, at least two private partners, development-policy significance, micro- and macro-level relevance, a multi-stakeholder approach, and potential for replication). Once the GTZ has approved the proposal, the partners benefit from its support for concept improvement. For a defined period of time during the project's implementation, the GTZ contributes sectoral, intercultural, and management know-how, mobilizes its networks and contacts with governments, authorities, and NGOs, and helps meet the project costs.

One example is the Strategic Alliance for the Fortification of Oil and Other Staple Foods (SAFO), which was launched in 2008 by BASF, the world's largest chemical company, to provide people with low-cost foods that are fortified with Vitamin A. The GTZ facilitates contact with competent authorities that, together with BASF, work on drawing up the legal framework. This framework includes regulations on quality labeling schemes that help foster confidence. BASF then supplies local food producers with the necessary vitamin fortification equipment and supports them in the pilot phase of viable business models. They also supply mobile laboratory equipment for monitoring vitamin A content and long-term quality assurance while the GTZ helps the respective public partner build capacity, overcome challenges, as well as evaluate and adjust the partnership. Through SAFO, the mortality rate among children and pregnant women is reduced at a low cost, and general levels of health and capacity for work improve.

Examples 1 and 2 illustrate a broker organization's practical involvement. However, they do not presume that these broker organizations always perform exactly those activities described as the partners' needs largely determine which of the activities identified in "The broker organizations' roles" section are actually performed. "We decide case-by-case how to engage. It depends on how much the other partners want us to be involved," one interviewee said. For instance, the World Economic Forum (Example 1) has a portfolio of different PPP programs and acts according to the

program’s domain and the partners’ needs at hand. Likewise, the GTZ (Example 2) has two PPP programs, both based on a responsive approach, but with different focuses.

In this regard, one restriction needs to be noted. Broker organizations that mainly adopt a proactive approach are sometimes also asked to join a PPP in the direction-setting phase. Conversely, those brokers focusing on a responsive approach generally do not have the necessary capacities to act proactively and work in the problem-setting phase (e.g., organizing discussion platforms, engaging in bilateral stakeholder dialogue, and conducting problem-related research without a concrete partnership mandate). Thus, if partners lack the necessary PPP capacities particularly in the problem-setting phase, a proactive broker organization may provide benefits. However, as we will see in the following, our data showed little difference between the proactive and responsive approach with regard to the roles adopted in the subsequent PPP phases.

The broker organizations’ roles

Research into our sample of broker organizations shed light on three different roles which these organizations play as facilitators during the PPP life cycle, namely the convener, mediator, and learning catalyst roles. Figure 2 illustrates the building blocks of our conceptual framework.

The broker organization as a *convener*

Our findings show that the broker organizations analyzed have large networks with actors from the private, public, and civil-society sectors. In these networks, they are respected for their commitment to development, their

track record with successful development projects, and their links to key organizations such as the United Nations, national ministries, or royal families. In line with prior studies we find that broker organizations help connect different stakeholders for a specific PPP. The various relationships across networks allow broker organizations access to information on past and current activities in their target development area and to the different stakeholders involved. In addition, they broaden understanding of the public problem in all its complexity (e.g., interaction between the global and local level).

In the *problem-setting phase* (proactive) broker organizations raise awareness of a specific public problem, identify relevant stakeholders, motivate them to get involved, and advocate a partnership approach. In order to create urgency surrounding the problem at hand and for the partnership benefits, broker organizations frequently organize problem-related round tables and disseminate PPP best practice cases “with an inspirational purpose” (private-sector engagement specialist). Brokers with a global scope can thereby link insights and actors from the local operational level (where the problem’s symptoms occur) and the global strategic level (where the problem frequently has its roots) and promote a systemic solution. However, the preparation of a PPP approach is resource-intensive. “What is often underestimated of the broker’s role is the amount of work needed before a partnership is established,” one respondent explained.

Once approaches for addressing a problem materialize in the *direction-setting phase*, brokers connect partners in favor of a common goal. Our research shows that their professional reputation, norms, and goals are essential for convincing partners. For example, many broker

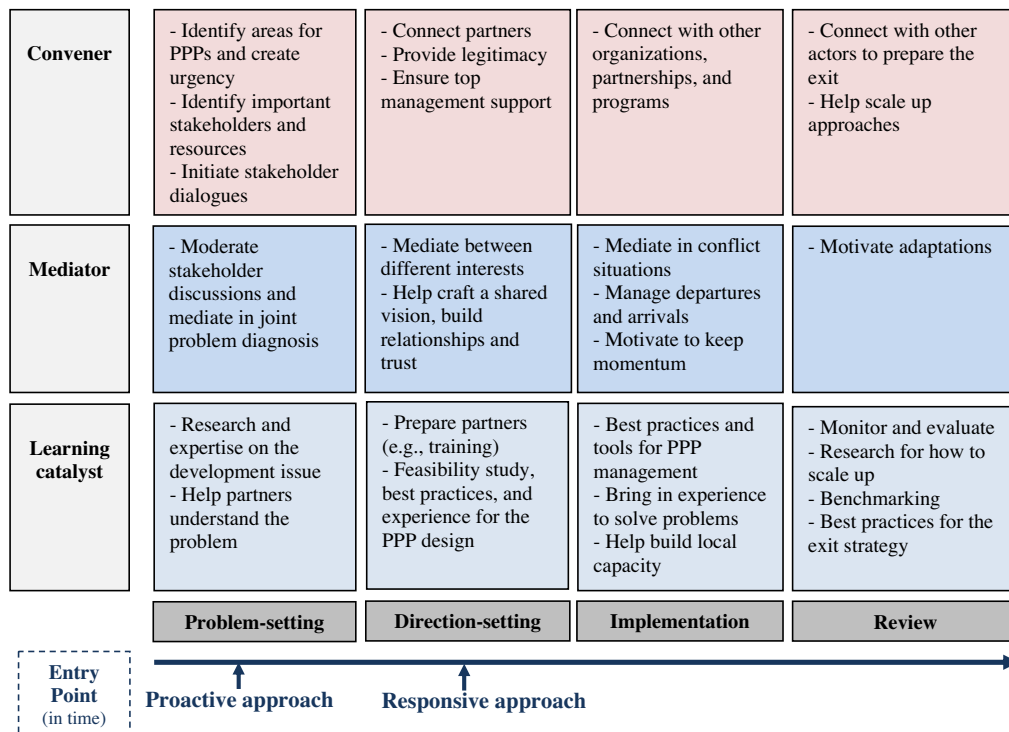


Figure 2 Conceptual framework for a broker organization’s roles in the partnering process.

organizations are committed to the overarching goals of the Millennium Development Declaration, which affirms the commitment to “a more peaceful, prosperous and just world” and to “making the right to development a reality for everyone” (United Nations General Assembly, 2000, pp. 1, 4). Representing these norms and having a record of the performance of PPPs for development as well as links to key organizations, broker organizations can increase the legitimacy of a PPP approach. Partnership legitimacy is crucial in promoting external support for the collaborative approach and reinforcing the partners’ commitment (Provan & Kenis, 2008). In this respect, a broker organization’s involvement may signal professionalism and indicate that the PPP is a serious endeavor and is closely monitored by a third party. At the same time, broker organizations try to secure the top management’s buy-in for the partnership, which is crucial in sustaining partner commitments.

During the *implementation phase*, broker organizations often organize small events across PPPs, such as partner lunches or themed workshops. If a broker organization facilitates several PPPs of the same type in a structured approach (e.g., partnerships that address the same problem in different regional areas but with a similar design), the mere act of comparing and exchanging with other partners might motivate the partners to commit to achieving their milestones. This was also described as a question of “not losing face” vis-à-vis partners engaged in other partnerships. If problems arise that the partners cannot solve alone, broker organizations help reconnect with prior partners or with external specialists. Consequently, we find that, besides connecting partners, a broker may help them connect with other initiatives, programs, experts, and links if problems occur. Furthermore, coordination with other initiatives is essential to reduce the fragmentation of activities. Given that the public problems at hand are often interlinked in a web of other problems, solutions should be systemic and holistic in design (Sandfort & Milward, 2008).

We find that during the *review phase*, broker organizations help scale up the results of a specific PPP to a national or global level. The World Bank, for example, “took the lessons of a local partnership for improved hygiene, developed the next steps with partners, and took it on the global agenda” (broker representative). Finally, by connecting the partners with other actors, broker organizations may help the partners to prepare a sustainable exit strategy.

The broker organization as a *mediator*

Broker organizations also act as mediators and influence interaction between partners. In the *problem-setting phase*, (proactive) broker organizations talk to the stakeholders to understand their positions and figure out how and where an overlapping interest might emerge. They thereby facilitate initial discussions: “The analogy I often use is having a party and introducing some people to one another. Here, you try to figure out what the commonality is on which they can build their conversation. So what I try to do organizationally is very similar” (program coordinator).

In the *direction-setting phase*, broker organizations help partners build relationships and seek transparency in design-

ing the PPP. They facilitate the initial meetings, ensure that the participants are highly motivated, use an inclusive approach, and navigate in one direction. “Having a broader platform of consultation [is important] for partner commitment and for the private sector to feel part of it and not just as someone you invite after you have all already decided,” as one interviewee explained. Furthermore, broker organizations encourage the partners to make partnership ideas more specific: to formulate a joint vision, anticipate potential problems, and develop a strategic plan for how to implement it. In this regard, broker organizations often convince the partners to draft a Memorandum of Understanding to clarify roles, responsibilities, and timelines as well as to make sure that the partnership builds on every partner’s strength. As the interviews highlight: “it is all about finding a win–win situation” and “if you don’t do the evaluation carefully and thoroughly, you can get halfway down the road, but in the end, the whole thing will fall apart.” To facilitate mutual understanding and the development of a shared working culture among partners, broker organizations can “...make them understand that there are different perspectives, motivations, and drivers. [However], we often share similar sorts of issues but we use different languages” (broker representative). They typically also encourage investment of time and energy in really understanding one another. Thereby, interviews showed that a shared vision that binds the partners is essential. Brokers thus try to “put the partners in a common passion” by making them reflect on their shared interests.

During *implementation*, broker organizations often withdraw from the operational partnership activities, but remain a key contact point when problems or conflicts arise. They can help either by providing support capacity or by building an enabling environment to solve conflicts and address problems. A key challenge in the PPP’s implementation is the dynamic among partner organizations. New organizations may join, others may leave, and partner representatives may change due to employee promotion or transfer (Huxham, 2003). In this respect, the broker organizations can help prepare the newcomers and facilitate their integration into the partnership. Overall, the interviewees noted that a broker organization’s role is to maintain close contact with the people involved, ask about progress and next steps, and check whether milestones are being achieved. As one interviewee summarized, it is about “making sure that people are with us – keeping [in] contact so that the project advances and things don’t get lost.” Particularly in times of substantial problems, broker organizations motivate partners to maintain their focus. Given that the PPP is often not the partners’ core business, it is sometimes crucial to have a third party that encourages them to commit time and energy to solving a problem. Interviews with broker representatives, however, showed that it is not easy for them to strike an adequate balance between supporting projects and leaving room for partners to be proactive, develop their own ideas, and take ownership of the joint activities.

During the *review phase*, broker organizations motivate partners to adapt the PPP to changing environments. Discussions may encourage partners to realize changes in their approach and to seek commitment for achieving the next milestones.

The broker organization as a *learning catalyst*

Our research shows that the broker organizations' extensive networks with other broker organizations or development agencies, as well as public, private, and civil-society actors, give them access to knowledge about PPPs and specific development challenges. In addition to the expertise embedded in their social network, broker organizations have developed solid experience and knowledge about PPPs by frequently engaging in these partnerships. We find that broker organizations help partners learn about the PPP approach and the development challenge at hand. Starting in the *problem-setting phase*, (proactive) broker organizations may provide problem-related background knowledge based on research, expertise, and experience and discuss the problem with stakeholders. Their experience with PPPs on the one hand and their problem-related knowledge on the other help identify areas where a partnership may make sense and in which form. Once a partnership approach becomes more tangible in the *direction-setting phase*, broker organizations are able to give partners very specific suggestions on partnership design, provide partnership tools and templates, and sometimes mandate a feasibility study on the approach. Such studies are either carried out directly by their organization or co-financed and outsourced to a third party. Besides providing problem-related and country-specific knowledge that might be considered in the partnership approach, broker organizations also strongly encourage partners to include PPP best practices.

During the *implementation* of a PPP, a broker organization's role as a learning catalyst manifests itself in the provision of concrete suggestions, tools, benchmarking, and training in partnership management, as well as through sensitizing partners to the different implementation challenges. To enhance institutional capacity, broker organizations sometimes also encourage the formation of topic-related national steering committees that provide PPPs with strategic support, legitimacy, and access to the committee members' networks. In the same vein, broker organizations may select individuals in key positions at the institutional level and then train them in convening and brokering, while also providing them with access to the broker organizations' networks. Thus, once a broker organization withdraws, it leaves behind well trained individuals that can continue the work and embed the philosophy of and expertise in networking and collaboration in the local environment.

In the *review phase*, brokers' monitoring or progress reports can yield insights for improvement. In this regard, broker organizations often distinguish between regular progress reports on PPP activities and substantial evaluations that concern the PPP's impact. "This is a role which is really appreciated by the business partners. Usually, they do not really know how to evaluate it or they prefer that we do this. It increases the legitimacy of the evaluation if it is done by an external party" (broker representative). Finally, broker organizations may make important lessons available to the wider public after having carefully removed sensible and confidential PPP-specific information. Furthermore, they may initiate research that helps scale up the partnership approach and places it on the global agenda.

Overall, our results show that broker organizations can facilitate the partnering process in their roles as conveners,

mediators, and learning catalysts throughout the entire PPP life cycle.

Discussion

In order to gain a broader understanding of how and why broker organizations may facilitate the partnering process by adopting the three different roles that result from our practical findings, we now apply general insights from the social capital and inter-organizational learning literatures. Implications for the successful performance of the broker organizations' roles are discussed and confronted with common challenges that broker organizations encounter. Finally, we identify conditions under which these roles are particularly helpful for the partners.

The *convener* role in light of the social capital literature

Our research on broker organizations for PPPs for development shows that they act as conveners (Gray, 1989), provide legitimacy for a collaborative approach (Wood & Gray, 1991), and build bridging social capital by spanning structural holes between different actors (Von Schnurbein, 2010). We expand existing knowledge on the convener role by establishing that besides connecting the respective partner organizations in the early phases of a PPP, the broker organizations' bridging social ties are important for connecting the partners with other PPPs, experts, and programs during the implementation and review phases. This makes it possible to align different PPPs and programs and to avoid fragmented approaches to a development challenge. Thereby our interviews highlight that a standard limitation of the broker's involvement for a certain period – irrespective of the PPP's potential and actual development – needs to be questioned. If the facilitation role, for instance with regard to government contacts, is needed beyond that period, the broker's withdrawal may prove detrimental to the PPP's achievements.

Although the convener role focuses on advocating the partnership approach and leveraging the broker organization's bridging social capital to connect actors, we find that it thereby lays the foundation of the development of bonding social capital between partners. Bonding social capital is based on strong relationships and norms that create trust, communication, and information sharing (Coleman, 1990), and as a form of social capital, it can be analyzed in its structural, relational, and cognitive dimension (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). While the structural dimension refers to the overall pattern of connections between actors (Burt, 1992), the relational dimension describes the personal relationships people have developed through a history of interactions (Granovetter, 1992). The cognitive dimension refers to those resources providing shared representation, interpretation, and systems of meaning among partners (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). By selecting partners for a PPP, broker organizations shape the connections between partners and thus the structural dimension of social capital between them. As high levels of mutual independence leverage the development of social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), broker organizations can improve the partnership configuration when bringing together partners

with complementary resources and a high stake in a development challenge (Logsdon, 1991) for which unilateral attempts have failed (Kolk et al., 2008). Furthermore, they can strengthen partnership stability by ensuring management support and providing legitimacy.

However, social capital needs to be maintained, renewed, and reconfirmed (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Thus, broker organizations have to invest continuously in their bridging relationships, despite constraints on organizational resources and capacities. Although constraints apply to all the defined broker roles, our results show that they are especially common in the convener role during the early phases. In other words, raising awareness about a problem, promoting the partnership idea, identifying and convening important stakeholders, and convincing key persons required as flagship providers to get an entire organization on board demand significant time and effort. Consequently, these activities necessitate a focused, well-reflected approach.

Westley and Vredenburg (1997) suggest that a partner organization can take on the convener role as well. However, there is not always a partner organization with the necessary capacity and bridging ties in cross-sectoral networks. In view of their broad networks and legitimacy, it is often broker organizations that are best placed to leverage their social capital (Von Schnurbein, 2010) and act as conveners.

The mediator role in light of the social capital literature

While using their bridging social capital in their role as conveners, our findings show that, in their role as mediators, broker organizations can facilitate the development of bonding social capital between partners. The focus here is on relational and cognitive dimensions. Our results expand existing insights into a mediator's activities during the negotiation processes (Bardach, 1998) in the problem- and direction-setting phases and show that broker organizations can influence the partners' decisions and behavior throughout the entire PPP life cycle. They seek to facilitate trusting relationships among partners, the relational facet of social capital (Granovetter, 1992). Particularly in PPPs for development, the absence of partners' joint PPP experience, unfamiliarity with the situation, and different backgrounds challenge the development of trusting relationships. At the same time, the latter are depicted as the essence of collaboration as they motivate commitment and cooperative behavior (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

Trust and coordination depend on reliable information about the partners' present interests. The greater the communication among partners, the greater their mutual trust and the easier they will find it to cooperate (Putnam, 1973). In this regard, when moderating partner discussions, broker organizations may encourage transparency (Bardach, 1998) and push partners to develop governance rules, help monitor their adherence, and hence strengthen the reliance on promises and rules. Moreover, shared norms strengthen the relational dimension of bonding social capital (Putnam, 1973). Our research shows that broker organizations can give partners insights into norms and principles in the development context, for example, the Millennium Development Goals, to channel the partners' behavior in one direction.

The presence of a reputable third-party organization encourages dialogue, causes parties to be more collaborative (Mesquita, 2007), and facilitates the development of trusting relationships. In the context of PPPs, this seems to apply particularly to brokers with a mandate and/or a track record of successful PPP initiatives. However, maintaining trusting relationships requires continuous investment by the partners. When a PPP faces initial challenges, partners tend to lose their motivation and slowly withdraw from investing in bonding social capital. Our research shows that in these situations, broker organizations help pull the partnership together by continuously seeking contact with all partners, encouraging them to invest time and effort, and keeping the work result-focused.

The cognitive dimension of social capital comprises resources providing a shared meaning and understanding among partners (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Mutual understanding is facilitated by the development of a shared working culture (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005) including shared values, beliefs, and behaviors. To align the partners' understanding of the partnership, the definition of shared goals is essential (Bryson et al., 2006). In this regard, broker organizations can encourage negotiation and ensure that the partners agree on clearly defined common goals. To foster aligned behaviors, broker organizations may need constantly to remind partners of the benefits of working with and adapting to one another. PPPs for development are formed on the basis of cultural compromises, and conflict will arise if certain partners rigidly push forward their own way of doing things and make no effort to understand the other partner. In this context, broker organizations may challenge unhelpful behavior and point out how this may impede the PPP's progress.

The development of shared language and codes is another important facet of the cognitive dimension of social capital as these are means by which people discuss and exchange information (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Indeed, different organizational languages are described as an obstacle for successful partnering (Huxham & Vangen, 2004). Our findings show that by having sound relationships across sectors, broker organizations can try to raise awareness of the differences, mediate between partners, and help them understand each other. This also includes encouraging them to be explicit on what they want to convey, particularly in conflict situations, and finally to find a common language.

To conclude, in the role of a mediator, broker organizations can strengthen the behavioral and cognitive facets of social capital between partners. At the same time, however, a broker organization's ability to encourage commitment in its mediating role is limited by the partner organizations' internal readiness and willingness. The mediator role requires striking an adequate balance between supporting projects and leaving room for partners to develop their own ideas and take ownership of the joint activities. This challenge is particularly acute when proactive broker organizations have programs in which partners benefit from a proven and, to a certain extent, standardized approach. Unless the broker organization clearly communicates that its approach might be helpful but that real success depends on everyone's commitment, partners may be complacent with regard to innovating new approaches or

adapting templates and frameworks to their own context. Often, when challenges arise, partners are tempted to take a step back and wait for the broker organization to suggest a solution.

Although a partner organization can take on the mediator role, Provan and Kenis (2008) found that partners tend to seek an intermediary organization's support in situations in which the levels of trust and goal consensus are low and the number of actors involved, like the need for partnership competencies, is high. A broker organization's legitimacy and track record of successful PPPs for development promotes a leap of faith for its mediator role among the partners. However, the mediating activities are largely based on the individual skills of broker organizations' employees. Brokering between partners is an "art" as it requires imagination, intuition, and people skills, but also a "science" as it requires being objective and systematic (Tennyson, 2005). Consequently, broker organizations need to systematically improve the employees' soft and hard skills that are needed for the role of a mediator.³ This may help them, for example, cope with the challenge we identify with regard to striking an appropriate balance between supporting projects and leaving room for partners to be proactive and take the lead in PPP management.

The learning catalyst role in light of the inter-organizational learning literature

We find that a third, learning catalyst, role comes into its own if the partner organizations – as frequently happens – have only limited PPP experience. As has been established in the Strategic Alliance literature, a partner's capability for successful alliances is promoted by past experience and by a dedicated alliance function that captures and stores alliance lessons and best practices, leverages such knowledge, and provides the alliance with legitimacy and support, as well as monitoring systems (Kale, Dyer, & Singh, 2002). Broker organizations have solid expertise in PPP management and the development challenge at hand. They generally invest in building organizational expertise backed by knowledge-management systems which help systematically identify, acquire, use, preserve, distribute, and develop relevant knowledge (Probst, 1998). We find that broker organizations can put their experience and expertise to the benefit of partners and promote their learning processes. To develop our argument, we distinguish between passive, active, and interactive learning (Lane & Lubatkin, 1998).

First, passive learning occurs when an organization acquires articulable knowledge about technical and managerial processes from sources such as journals, seminars, and consultants (Lane & Lubatkin, 1998). In this regard, broker organizations frequently pool their experience and document it in best practices, tools, and templates. This, however, requires that local knowledge about PPP best practices be transferred 'bottom-up' within the organization despite time constraints of local staff tied up in partnership work. By sharing their knowledge pool with the partners, broker organizations can stimulate passive learning. The

knowledge acquired by passive learning includes experience garnered from any partnership that has been formed in the past (i.e. general partnering experience) (Gulati, Lavie, & Singh, 2009; Hoang & Rothaermel, 2005). Furthermore, as learning depends on a partner's ability to recognize, value, assimilate, and use new external knowledge (Lane & Lubatkin, 1998), we find that broker organizations often seek discussions with partners to help them understand the documented lessons learnt and answer related questions.

Second, we find that broker organizations can also stimulate more active forms of learning by promoting benchmarking and facilitating knowledge transfer between partnerships. Particularly in sophisticated programs of proactive broker organizations, the series of similar PPPs in the same domain may help learning across partnerships: it facilitates benchmarking processes and the transfer of best practices. The latter can be discussed, for example, during events with representatives from the various PPPs. Active learning requires the partners to identify important lessons. Through workshops and training, broker organizations can support this process by helping partners prepare their engagement and discussing best practices for working with different partner backgrounds, integrating the PPP engagement into the individual partner organization, and offering solutions to design challenges. Such challenges stem from tensions between partner autonomy and accountability, efficiency and stakeholder integration, and flexibility and stability. The broker organization may also discuss an appropriate exit strategy with the partners and help prepare its realization. This includes capacity-building activities at a local level and disseminating the lessons learnt at a global level. For example, brokers use PPP projects as pilots and seek to motivate high-level actors (e.g., governments) to scale up approaches with a broader scope: "from pilot to policy," as one broker organization puts it. In this context, broker organizations frequently provide advice for policy formulation and harmonization, which in turn facilitates the implementation of current and future partnerships in that area (World Economic Forum, 2005).

If partners incorporate a broker's and other partnerships' lessons learnt, they may avoid common pitfalls. However, an organization's gain from this general partnering experience is limited because some experiences are not completely applicable across all partnerships (Gulati et al., 2009). Rather, partners have to identify relational or partnership-specific factors through interactive learning (Lane & Lubatkin, 1998); that is, developing knowledge which assists in building trust and facilitates coordination with certain partners, otherwise known as partner-specific experience (PSE) (Gulati et al., 2009). Broker organizations can stimulate PSE by fostering discussions between and within partner organizations, motivate those organizations to question previous assumptions and beliefs, and promote continuous and open lines of communication. Our results indicate that when broker organizations frequently raise questions of "why" and "how" about a specific PPP, they can promote the partners' ability to identify partnership opportunities, form interactive relationships, and establish relational mechanisms (i.e. "relational capability" (Kale, Singh, & Perlmutter, 2000)).

³ See, for example, the Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme (<http://partnershipbrokers.org/>).

Overall, the learning catalyst role is intertwined with the convener and mediator roles. First, broker organizations can access further general partnering experience through their network ties. Thus, they use their brokering position to gather and disseminate knowledge. This also means that they use their bridging social ties to scale up lessons learnt and specific PPP designs. Second, we see a link between the development of partner-specific experience and the development of bonding ties. Indeed, learning is leveraged by direct exposure and relational ties (Zietsma, Winn, Branzei, & Vertinsky, 2002). Consequently, by facilitating the development of bonding ties between partners, broker organizations also promote the establishment of partner-specific experience and context-dependent learning processes.

Conclusions

Our study approaches a conceptual gap in the literature on PPPs for development and explores the different roles that broker organizations play during the partnering process as well as the challenges inherent in these roles. We find that broker organizations' facilitation efforts go beyond brokerage in the sense of the convening of and match-making between partners to build a PPP. Our results show that broker organizations can play a critical role as conveners, mediators, and learning catalysts during the entire partnership life cycle. Thus, we advance current knowledge on broker organizations by illustrating and explaining the activities they carry out in each role throughout the different partnership phases.

For the convener role, our research expands existing insights and shows that it also includes connecting the partners with important actors during the entire PPP life cycle. For a theoretical foundation of this role, we build on prior findings showing that the broker organizations' contribution to the partnering process largely derives from their bridging social capital, which is embedded in wide networks and organizational legitimacy (Von Schnurbein, 2010). Furthermore, our research highlights that broker organizations can motivate partners to develop bonding social capital. By integrating prior research on the role of a mediator in the negotiation processes (Bardach, 1998), we show that broker organizations can facilitate the development of the structural, relational, and cognitive dimension of bonding ties between partners during the entire PPP life cycle. Finally, we find that further benefit for the partnership process derives from the broker organizations' experience and knowledge of the PPP approach, a dimension not previously discussed in the literature on facilitation roles in collaboration. Our study provides insights which suggest that, in their role as learning catalysts, broker organizations can facilitate passive, active, and interactive learning processes among partner organizations.

On the one hand, our conceptual framework may help partner organizations in their decision on whether or not approach a broker. While partner organizations can also adopt the identified broker roles, our research indicates that the involvement of an intermediary broker organization offers advantages in situations where partners lack a brokering position in cross-sectoral networks, the capacity to leverage bridging ties, and/or the legitimacy to convene diverse stakeholders. Furthermore, partners may benefit from a

broker organization's facilitation work when they have never worked together before, lack mutual understanding, and trust, and moreover have only limited experience of and expertise in designing, implementing, and reviewing PPPs for development. Our results also indicate that the brokers' organizational capacities, such as a large network, specialized staff and processes, a solid reputation, and knowledge management systems, allow them to offer more substantial support to the partners than an individual broker can, whether working independently or within a partner organization. On the other hand, our conceptual framework may help broker organizations better understand the roles they can play beyond convening in the early PPP phases and help prepare for and broaden their facilitation work.

It is important to note several limitations that readers should keep in mind in relation to the study's contributions. First, our paper is positioned within the context of PPPs for development, as their cross-sectoral nature and complexity proves particularly challenging and thus calls for a facilitator's support. The focus is on the broker organizations' involvement in the partnering process with the assumption that these organizations can help partners overcome common partnering challenges that jeopardize the successful partnering process. However, the study places less focus on the PPPs' outcome for the problem addressed and local beneficiaries. The results indicate that the recourse to broker organizations' large networks, their development experience, and their efforts to scale up best practices may ensure more integrated solutions to the public problem addressed. Further research is needed on the broker organizations' impact on the PPP's outcomes and beneficiaries.

Second, our analysis is based on available documents, the perceptions of broker organizations' representatives, and control interviews with partners involved. While our model encompasses the most striking roles of a broker organization, the interviews showed that not all broker organizations fulfill these roles in an optimal way. High levels of bureaucracy in big broker organizations may lead to slow decision-making processes and reduce the scope for flexible approaches. However, public problems call for customized solutions and flexible adaptation. Furthermore, resource constraints limit the broker organizations' fulfillment of roles; such constraints include a lack of technical and financial resources, the need to develop sophisticated brokering skills, and a lack of in-house technical capacity to monitor achievements.

The conceptual framework developed in this article allows for a better understanding of the roles of broker organizations and provides guidance and structure for future work. As a next step for research, the challenges that these organizations face in adopting their roles may be explored in depth, including how they constrain the role performance and how they can be overcome. The challenges we identified in terms of resource constraints for the convener role, defining the line between a broker and a partner role in the mediating work, and issues of confidentiality and highly charged local staff as regards the learning catalyst role may serve as a starting point. Furthermore, relevant indicators can be developed for assessing the facilitation capacity of a broker organization. These may, at the same time, reveal weaknesses and further challenges. For example, when assessing the convener role, the broker

Table 1A Broker organization sample.

Broker organization	(a) Legal form (b) Number of employees	Partners	Interview partners	Interview partners (control interviews)
BPD Water and Sanitation	(a) Non-profit membership organization (b) c. 5	Global network with c. 400 organizations including private, public, and civil-society organizations as well as donor and international organizations, and academic groups	• Program Director	• Civil-society partner; Water Partnership, Haiti
Business Humanitarian Forum	(a) Non-profit organization (b) c. 10	Global network with partners and donors including companies, international organizations, NGOs, governments, and public agencies	• Deputy Director	• Corporate partner; Bosnian Wood initiative
Business for Social Responsibility	(a) Non-profit membership organization (b) c. 95	Global network of 250 member companies; collaborating with partners from all sectors	• Consulting and Member Services	• Corporate partner; Health Returns Program, Vietnam
Business in the Community	(a) Non-profit membership organization (b) c. 360	c. 850 company members, diverse programs in the areas environment, community, marketplace, and workplace; corporation with NGOs and public agencies	• Employee Volunteering Campaign Manager	• Corporate partner; Business Class program, UK
Canadian International Development Agency	(a) Federal agency (b) c. 1500	Collaboration with governments, NGOs, international organizations, and companies	• Investment Cooperation Program Division	• No access for confidentiality reasons
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit	(a) Federal agency (b) c. 15,000	Activities commissioned by the BMZ or other German ministries, the governments of other countries and international clients (e.g., European Commission, UN, World Bank), as well as private companies	• Project Manager	• Corporate partner; SAFO-Initiative, global
European Academy of Business in Society	(a) Non-profit membership organization (b) c. 11	c. 15 company members as well as international business schools	• Director General	• Civil-society partner; research and dialogue project
German Water Partnership	(a) Non-profit membership organization (b) c. 4	c. 269 members, including companies, public and private institutes; joint initiative of the German private and public sectors	• Director	• Corporate partner; Germany
Indian Business Alliance on Water	(a) Platform led by a non-profit organization (b) c. 5	Collaboration with companies, public agencies, and governments (supported by international organizations and an industry association)	• Project Officer	• Corporate partner • Civil-society partners; Water Desalination Partnership, India
Madrasati	(a) Non-profit organization (b) c. 19	Initiated by Her Majesty; working with private companies, the Jordan ministries, and public schools	• Initiative Director • Outreach & Program Development Manager • Community Mobilizer	• Corporate partner • Public partner • Civil-society partners; school partnership, Jordan
Partnership Sourcing Ltd. (PSL)	(a) Private limited liability company (b) c. 10	Initiated by the Ministry, network of c. 70 organizations, services to be paid for by the partners from the public and private sector	• Operations Director	• Corporate partner; Learning Network, UK

Table 1A (continued)

Broker organization	(a) Legal form (b) Number of employees	Partners	Interview partners	Interview partners (control interviews)
SchuleWirtschaft Germany	(a) Affiliate of a registered association (b) c. 130	Governed by partners from the public and private sectors, services for both sectors	• Regional Director	• Corporate partner; school partnership
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	(a) Federal agency (b) c. 1500	Collaboration with the partners from the public, private, and civil-society sectors	• Programme Manager Public Private Development Partnerships	• Civil-society partner; Swiss-South Africa Cooperation Initiative
United Nations Development Program (GSBI, GIM)	(a) International organization (UN) (b) c. 6000	Collaboration with governments, NGOs, international organizations, and companies	• General Manager • Private-Sector Engagement Policy Specialist	• Corporate partner • Civil-society partner; Madagascar (email discussions)
UNIDO	(a) International organization (UN) (b) c. 710	Collaboration primarily with companies, but also with NGOs and governments	• Industrial Development Officer	• Private partner; textile cluster, India
United Nations Office of the Global Compact	(a) International organization (UN) (b) c. 40	Collaboration primarily with companies, but also NGOs	• Head of Networks and Partnerships	• Corporate partner, Germany
US Agency for International Development (USAID)	(a) Federal agency (b) c. 3000	Collaboration with governments, NGOs, international organizations, and companies	• Global Development Alliance Advisor • Deputy Division Chief of the Global Development Alliance • Program Coordinator HIV/AIDS	• Private partner; HIV/AIDS partnership (email discussions)
World Bank (Health Systems)	(a) International organization (b) c. 9000	Collaboration with governments, NGOs, international organizations, companies	• Associate Director Global Education • Senior Project Manager, Water Initiative • Senior Director Head, Center for Global Industries	• Civil-society partner; hygiene partnership, Ghana
World Economic Forum	(a) Non-profit membership organization (b) c. 500	Companies, NGOs, governments (company membership)		• Corporate partners • Public partners; Egyptian Education Initiative

organization's used network ties, the time-span of the partnership formation, and the representation of necessary resources and capacities seem important. While constructive conflict resolution is an indicator for a broker organization's mediating role, the use of PPP tools and the implementation of best practices are indicators for its role in promoting learning. Future reflections on and evaluation of broker organizations are fundamental for developing and improving PPPs – a means to tackle successfully the challenges faced by humanity.

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Appendix A.

See Table 1A.

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