Ten Lessons on Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

Summary: Ten lessons on multi-stakeholder partnerships

This article presents learning about multi-stakeholder partnerships drawn from the work of the Synergos Institute, a global non-profit organization working to reduce poverty and advance social justice. The lessons come out of our experience with four initiatives: The Partnership for Child Nutrition (India), the African Public Health Leadership and Systems Innovation Initiative (Namibia), the Aboriginal Leadership Initiative (Canada), and the Agricultural Transformation Agency (Ethiopia). The ten learnings are:

1. **Go it alone...if you can**
   Not all issues are appropriate for a partnership approach. Proper issue analysis is essential to determine if others need to be involved. Generally, the more complex an issue is the greater the need to bring together diverse actors to collaborate.

2. **Start-up is half the battle**
   Partnerships are often born out of political will. A legitimate invitation is essential. Avoiding pressure to move prematurely to action and addressing questions of purpose, power, and success criteria early on increase the likelihood of later success.

3. **Do your homework**
   An early research and analysis phase allows partnerships to diagnose issues correctly (situation analysis), to assess the interests of those to be involved (stakeholder analysis) and to develop the right approach (process design).

4. **Find the bridgers**
   "Command and control" leadership may be less effective in situations requiring stakeholders from different backgrounds to collaborate. Multi-stakeholder partnerships may best be guided by "bridging leaders" who are able to translate meaning across sectors, to build trust, to co-create with others and to generate collective action.

5. **Let go**
   Working in partnership often involves letting go of cherished beliefs, altering worldviews, and relinquishing control. Helping partners shift how they think about themselves, others, and the world is often the toughest, and least attended

to, aspect of partnerships. Enabling partners to let go often creates new space for innovation and collaboration.

6. **Engage the community**
   Partnerships can often operate at a level divorced from on-the-ground realities as experienced by the people we seek to help. Communities have special insights and problem-solving ingenuity. Engaging communities requires thoughtful attention to address issues of power and social distance.

7. **Envision scale but start small**
   It is key to clearly articulate a vision for change at scale while at the same time acting in small steps. Synergos has used a prototype – pilot - scale model, which cultivates co-ownership from government, business and civic leaders/ organizations throughout the process.

8. **Work multiple levels simultaneously**
   To bring about broad-based change, Synergos has found it effective to work at multiple levels, targeting effort in three areas: macro level (top leadership, policy), mezzo level (middle management and oversight) and micro level (field delivery).

9. **Shift the institutional arrangements**
   A key component in achieving change often involves shifting "institutional arrangements," altering the nature of institutions or the relationship between them in order to unlock new action, release resources, generate innovation and/or to improve responsiveness to citizen/client needs, etc.

10. **Measure the tangible as well as the intangible**
    It is often key to track both tangible changes on the ground (e.g. income, crop yields, health, etc.) as well as factors that may be less tangible (e.g. institutional arrangements, relationships, changes in attitude.). Each type of change necessary, but alone may not sufficient, to bring about a lasting impact.

For more information

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Ten lessons on multi-stakeholder partnerships

"Partnerships."

Partnership is among the most over-used and least well-defined words in the English language. To get anything done these days, we are all supposed to be working in partnership. The answer to every big problem, the conclusion of every panel discussion on global issues these days seems to be, you guessed it, partnerships. Apparently we have lost the capacity to do anything by ourselves. What does it all mean and what's the use of all this partnering? And if we are going to be working in partnership, how can we ensure that partnerships are an efficient tool?

The Synergos Institute is a global nonprofit organization working to reduce poverty and advance social justice. Our work seeks to shift the underlying systems and structures that keep people poor. Given the nature and depth of the challenges we address, our work has often involved operating in collaboration with others. To realize sustainable solutions to complex development issues at scale, we have actively engaged government, business, civil society, and communities. The work we do is not characteristic of all partnerships but instead focuses on the messiest and most difficult kinds of collaboration, where stakeholders with radically different worldviews and interests come together to address a common challenge.

In this article we share ten learnings about multi-stakeholder partnerships, gathered over the last 25 years. In doing so we will draw on four recent case examples:

- **Partnership for Child Nutrition** (India) – a large scale initiative bringing together leading government agencies, global and Indian businesses, non-governmental organizations, and community groups to develop systemic interventions to reduce child under-nutrition in the state of Maharashtra. (syngs.info/bhavishya)

- **African Public Health and Systems Innovation Initiative** (Namibia) – a nation-wide initiative to increase the effectiveness of the Namibian Ministry

of Health and Social Services with a focus on maternal health care. (www.africanhealthleadership.org)

- **The Aboriginal Leadership Initiative** (Canada) – **a broadly based** program involving First Nations, national and provincial government agencies, and corporations to build a new approach to improve quality of life for Canadian First Nations. (ahpciiuk.com)

- **The Agricultural Transformation Agency** (Ethiopia) – a national effort designed to improve the quality and output of Ethiopian agriculture by transforming key agricultural value chains. [1] (www.ata.gov.et)

We recognize of course that each partnership is unique, and that there are no immutable rules that apply always to all contexts. That said, what follows are the broad learnings that Synergos has been able to synthesize from our direct experience in convening and guiding partnerships around the globe.

1. Go it alone…if you can

This may sound like an odd lesson coming from an organization that is all about partnerships, but if you can get the job done without partnering, do so. Partnerships are almost always more difficult and more time-consuming than working alone. It is critical to reflect first about the nature of the problem you are trying to solve. Can satisfactory results be achieved without working with others? What kind of scale is required? How can sustainability be assured?

Synergos' rule of thumb is that the more complex a problem, is the greater the need to work with others.

Another way to say this is that the answer to complexity is… *diversity*. The more multi-faceted and confusing a challenge is, the greater the need to bring different types of knowledge, assets and know-how to the table to find solutions. We have found that with a certain class of particularly complex challenges, if we want solutions that stick and which can scale, we need to integrate the capacities and resources of government, business, NGOs, and communities.

In India, for example, we appreciated that the issue of child undernutrition was more than the simple prospect of putting food in children's mouths. It has to do with

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[1] Additional details on each of these initiatives is available on the individual partnership websites and at www.synergos.org.

agriculture, distribution systems, social structure, food prices, clean water, sanitation, behavior, corruption, culture, the caste system, the place of women and girls, etc. As much as we may have wanted to focus on only one of these issues, we felt we would not have been able to make a real dent in the issue without taking a broader approach. That is, if we had found some clever way to get nutritious food to young children, but ignored the fact that kids drank dirty water and that girls could not easily get access to the food, and so on, we would not bring about any real change. We decided to bring together actors from a range of sectors, disciplines and places in Indian society in order to somehow approximate in our partnership the multi-faceted nature of the issue we were trying to address. In this context, it was critical to engage government (e.g. for scale), the private sector (e.g. for business skill), as well as NGOs (e.g. for community knowledge) if we were to generate new ideas to address a massive challenge.

2. Start-up is half the battle

Through long experience, we have learned that the way a partnership begins can often powerfully shape the way an initiative emerges over time. It is far better to give time and thought on the front-end than to try to fix things later. We have often felt significant pressure to "just get on with it" and to move quickly to action. Over time, we have come to appreciate that the eventual action will be more effective if we are sure that fundamental issues have been addressed first. In all of our major partnership projects, there has been a significant gestation period before action on the ground happens where key questions get sorted out and trust is built.

Each of our partnerships originated as a result of *political will*, in contexts where there is public pressure, citizen demand, and energy for change. In many instances such demands end up on the desk of senior government or civic leaders, who become champions for change and who then invite us in to catalyze action.

Without an invitation, or lacking the stamp of support from legitimate leaders within a society, we simply could not operate. In Namibia, for example, we were invited in by the Prime Minister, who was alarmed by the skyrocketing maternal mortality rate in his country. In Ethiopia, the initiative was likewise invited in by the Prime Minister, who sought to bring about rapid change in the agriculture sector. In Canada, it was the Deputy Minister of Justice who sought to find new solutions to the issue of First Nation-Government relations, reacting to mounting political pressure to do so.

Beyond the high-level championships, our partnerships often begin with a core group of five to six partners who begin framing the basic contours of a partnership. In the

Canada program, we referred to this group as the "initiating partners" who not only gave the initial spark to a major initiative but who also sought over time to widen the circle of partnership to a range of other actors. The initiating partners group in Canada, comprised of First Nations, two levels of Government, and Synergos, played a sophisticated, and often challenging role in the project by holding the initiative together over time, seeking out missing partners, and overcoming challenges as they arose. This team developed an extraordinary level of trust, which formed the glue that enabled the initiative to hold together through the myriad challenges it faced. In fact, if we peel the layers of any effective partnership, we are likely to find a core set of people who trust one another, share values, and who care for one another.

In the early stages of the Canada project, and other such partnerships, the initiating partners group had to answer a host of formative questions, such as:

- What ultimately are we trying to achieve?
- What is success and how will we measure it?
- Who will determine what success is?
- What are the underlying intentions and motivations of key stakeholders?
- What voices need to be represented?
- What principles and values will guide us?
- How will we make decisions?
- How will we deal with power differences?
- What are our resource requirements and where will resources come from?
- What is our aspiration with respect to scale?
- What do we know, and what do we need to know, about the situation we are addressing and the stakeholders we are engaging?

Coming up with thoughtful responses to these, and other key questions, early on will help guide a partnership through the challenging and fragile moments of conception. We have learned that answers to such questions often change over time as a partnership emerges and adapts to new situations, so fundamental-level conversations will need to be held at many junctures during a partnership.

3. Do your homework

Each of our major partnerships has been guided by three pieces of up-front research and preparation: 1) situation analysis, 2) stakeholder analysis, 3) process design, each described below.

Situation analysis

While each of our partnerships has had the intention of generating innovation on a given development challenge, we have wanted to ensure that we begin with a firm grasp of what has already been tried, what works and what doesn't. We have typically employed a mix of tools, both analytical and experiential, at this stage.

For example, the Namibia project was informed by a significant piece of analysis on the performance of the Ministry of Health and Social Services. This research was a powerful way to get the attention of senior leaders. However, we developed an approach that went beyond facts and figures in order to enable people within the healthcare system to see it with new eyes. As a complement to the analytical work, we facilitated a series of 'learning journeys' which enabled senior healthcare leaders to get out of the office and to 'walk in the shoes' of nurses, administrators, and clinicians at other levels within the system. This helped top leaders to re-perceive the system and to see problems, challenges, and opportunities more clearly, as a result of first-hand experience. Taken together, the analytical work and the experiential learning generated political will for change and also helped pinpoint some key areas of highest leverage where intervention would yield the highest pay-off.

Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analysis is another key analytical tool we use to develop and manage partnerships. In each partnership, we construct a stakeholder "map" that identifies the organizations and individuals with a stake in the effort, traces the linkages between them and details perceived interests and the ability to influence outcomes. Stakeholders are sorted into different categories, differentiating them along a continuum from those whose engagement is critical to achieve outcomes to those who simply need to be kept informed. We develop detailed relationship management plans to ensure that we are engaging each stakeholder as proactively and thoughtfully as possible.
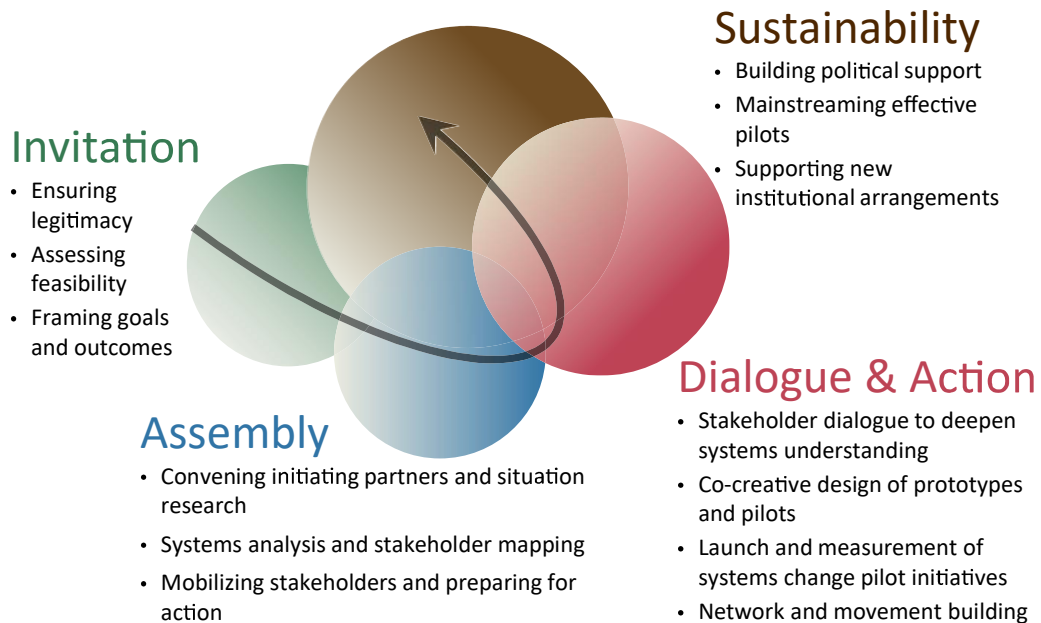
Process d**esign**
The adage "good process leads to good outcomes" could not be more true. We invest time at the beginning stages of a partnership to develop a detailed process design, mapping out when and how we will engage stakeholders over time in order to achieve the desired results. Synergos has developed its own open-source, partnership process

framework, which is called the Synergos Inclusive Partnerships Lifecycle.[2] The Lifecycle is tailored to each specific context, but also offers general guidance on forming and managing the main stages of a complex partnership. The Lifecycle draws on another framework called Theory U.[3]

Inclusive Partnerships Lifecycle

Sustainability
- Building political support
- Mainstreaming effective pilots
- Supporting new institutional arrangements

Invitation
- Ensuring legitimacy
- Assessing feasibility
- Framing goals and outcomes

Assembly
- Convening initiating partners and situation research
- Systems analysis and stakeholder mapping
- Mobilizing stakeholders and preparing for action

Dialogue & Action
- Stakeholder dialogue to deepen systems understanding
- Co-creative design of prototypes and pilots
- Launch and measurement of systems change pilot initiatives
- Network and movement building

4. Find the bridgers

We have come to recognize that there is a different type of leadership that is required to make partnerships work. "Command and control" leadership often is not relevant or effective in contexts where what is required is to harmonize different stakeholders with different interests and worldviews. Synergos has developed a leadership paradigm, called Bridging Leadership, suited for working across boundaries, sectors

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[2] Additional details about the Lifecycle are available at www.synergos.org/partnerships/about.htm.

[3] Theory-U is a general theory of stimulating social innovation, developed by Otto Sharmer, Joseph Jaworski, Peter Senge and Betty Sue Flowers. In applying Theory-U, Synergos has worked in partnership with the Presencing Institue.

and cultures. The following chart outlines the differences between command and control leadership and bridging leadership:

From leader as	To leader as
Commander and controller	Facilitator and convener
Sole owner of the problem and the solution	Prime mover, but a co-owner of the problem and solution
Having all the answers	Creator of the conditions where answers emerge
A single intelligence	Focuser of collection attention and the distiller of collective intelligence
Head of one organization	Ligament between organizations and institutions
Holder of power	Distributor of power, enabler of new things to emerge
Expert	Non-expert, mobilizing the expertise and inner-knowing of others
Stoic	Authentic and emotionally open

Each of our main partnerships has been guided and facilitated by leaders with the bridging characteristics described above. Our effort in Namibia, for example, was led by an extraordinary bridging leader named Len le Roux. Before joining the initiative, Mr. le Roux had worked for 20 years as the director of Namibia's largest corporate foundation. He came to us with excellent relationships with senior government officials, the Namibian corporate community and with the NGO sector. He has a remarkable ability to speak the language of all sectors and to communicate across boundaries. Largely because of these abilities and because of his credibility as a trusted Namibian leader guiding a Namibian partnership, our effort was able to secure the participation of a diverse set of partners. Like Namibia, our partnerships in Canada, Ethiopia, and India have all been led and staffed by local leaders, people with remarkable bridging skills and legitimacy within their culture and context. In addition to staffing each of the partnerships with these 'bridging leaders' we have also dedicated considerable effort to building the capacity of partners and local organizations to work effectively across sectors.

5. Let go

Working in partnership is often about letting go of cherished beliefs, altering worldviews, and relinquishing control. Helping partners to shift the way they think about themselves, others, and the world is by far the toughest, and often least attended to, aspect of partnerships. Even when we share common goals with partners,

mindset issues can represent obstacles to real collaboration. We have found that often many of these "below the tip of the iceberg" issues can sabotage a partnership if they remain unaddressed. Partnerships can be full of conflict, but in many instances these conflicts are left unaddressed – avoided out of politeness, fear, anger or a whole range of other reasons.

We have learned to lean into the conflicts and to find the means of dealing with the discords between stakeholders. We do this for two reasons: one is that it is impossible to really collaborate in the absence of trust and the other is that we often find the seed of great innovation and a spark of incredible energy when we unpack differences in a structured and careful way.

In our India child nutrition program we encountered partners with particularly entrenched ways of thinking about the problem, the solution, and about others in the system. We had brought together about 30 leaders in the field of child nutrition from government, NGOs, and business to come up with more integrated and sustainable solutions to the issue. From the beginning we found some partners rallying around well-worn perspectives about the other partners– the NGOs perceived the government people as corrupt, the government people saw the business people as greedy, the business people saw the NGOs as irrelevant, and so on. These deeply held perceptions were not exactly a formula for a strong collaboration.

In India, we supported partners to open up and shift patterns of thinking so as to enable new collaborative action. In one approach, we sent partners out on learning journeys to remote villages, child feeding centers, health care facilities, and so on. The ostensible purpose was to help raise the level of awareness about the broader system at play for actors operating at one point in the child nutrition system. The deeper purpose was to provide partners from different sectors with a base of shared experience in order to build trust. As the representative from the government, her colleague from an NGO, and their partner from a leading food business travelled hour after hour in a mini-van down a dirt road; they were hot and uncomfortable, but they were hot and uncomfortable together.

These shared experiences helped to break down some of the preconceived notions that the partners had entered the initiative with, to humanize relationships, and to lay the groundwork for collaboration.

Another, less traditional, strategy we employed in the India program was to have partners spend three days on a solo nature retreat in the foothills of the Himalayas. Most had not had significant nature experience and came to the retreat with a high degree of apprehension. As we sent the partners out into their solo experience, we

asked them to reflect on their life's purpose and how they could best imagine serving the needs of undernourished children. After the solo time in nature, each partner shared his or her experience with the others. The opportunity to hear one another's fears, challenges, and authentic desire to help children was transformative and enabled the partners to begin building relationships based on empathy and trust. The quality of interaction between participants before and after the nature retreat was remarkably deeper and laid the foundation for the hard work and on-the-ground collaboration to follow. The experience helped the participants stretch their sense of identity and to grow, and as they did new spaces for innovation and collaboration opened up.

This is why at Synergos we say that "personal transformation is the first step towards social transformation."

6. Engage the community

There is a temptation in large-scale initiative like the one described here to operate at a level divorced from on-the-ground realities as experienced by the people and communities we seek to help. Synergos has always believed in working closely with communities impacted by the problems we address. We believe that these communities know more about their own lives, challenges, and opportunities than we ever can. We have also come to revere the problem-solving ingenuity and wisdom of people at the community level. But how do we engage? How do we define "the community?" Who can represent the voice of others in a community, how do we manage power differences between certain stakeholders (government, businesses) and others (communities, people who are poor)? Synergos has not found perfect answers, and every context and culture is different, but we have developed some approaches that have helped us bring in community voice and participation. Here are some examples.

Canada

One of the major objectives of the initiative was to build an equal partnership between First Nations, government and others. We encountered some big challenges in achieving this, given a long history of mistrust and considerable power differences between communities and others. Building a partnership of equals meant extensive consultation and preparation for the groups *separately* before we brought them together. We encouraged community-level coordinators to spend extensive time in First Nations communities working with leaders, engaging tribal members and bringing together people in various forums to help clarify community goals and

aspirations and to consider why and how they wanted to work with government and potential partners outside the community.

Likewise, we spent significant time with key government and business people to raise their level of awareness about the history, culture and aspirations of the First Nations involved in the project. By the time we brought all the groups together, they were far better prepared to engage in action-oriented dialogue than if we had brought them in cold. What unfolded in this initiative was quite significant in terms of building trust between First Nations, government, NGOs and business leaders. The stakeholders began to build a common system of meaning and an allegiance to the whole initiative. (The partners began proudly wearing the jackets and baseball hats we made with the project name and logo, participating in this small and symbolic way in the new collective identity being created).

Namibia

Here the project was initiated at the national level, which meant that directly engaging communities in the process was more complicated than in Canada. Despite this, we held a strong commitment to ensuring that the perspective of the health systems' end users was represented. In every meeting of the partnership we symbolically set aside seats for mothers and pregnant women because of our focus on maternal health. Sometimes the seats were empty, but it served as a reminder of who the project was meant to assist. Sometimes the seats were filled with women whose real life perspectives and stories were critical to shaping thinking about the project.

In addition, our project team made an extraordinary effort to interview users of the health system, regularly speaking with nurses, doctors, and women in ante-natal care clinics, maternity wards, and in villages to listen to their concerns and ideas and to reflect their input back into the partnerships' plans.

7. Envision scale but start small

If our ultimate intention is systems change, where do we start? We have learned to appreciate the importance of clearly articulating a vision for broad-based systems change and planning to achieve results at scale, while at the same time acting in small steps. To plan a sequence of actions that builds from small to large scale, we borrow again from Theory-U and its industrial innovation model.

We begin by engaging partners in the design of prototypes. A prototype could be a written model, flowchart, drawing or other representation of how a particular idea might work in the world. We work over time to iteratively design prototypes,

gathering feedback, redesigning, gathering feedback, redesigning and so forth. Prototypes pass through a series of stages and gates, screening as we go for potential impact, scalability, political support, fundability, do-ability, etc. We energetically engage critical actors, such as political leaders, government ministries, and corporate executives, even at this early stage of prototyping in order to cultivate ownership from those whose leadership, resources and political capital will be required for scaling.

Prototypes that survive the vetting process are adapted into pilots, which are on-the-ground tests of the prototypes, with meaningful budgets, timeframes, impact targets, and population coverage. In India, for example, we developed a suite of eight integrated pilot programs covering a population of about two million people. What was unique and different about these pilots was that they came about as a result of input from government, business, and civil society players and therefore were owned by, and bore the imprint of, a broad constituency of leadership organizations in the nutrition arena. The pilots took a systems-approach to addressing the child nutrition challenge, from prevention (eg. education for women, girls and young mothers) to strengthening systems (eg. improving government service delivery and supply chains using business know-how) and to emergency care for underserved populations (eg. feeding centers on construction sites, mobile feeding centers).

As we implement pilots, we rigorously test for impact while at the same time developing effective scaling strategies for pilots. We have learned to use these pilots as a vehicle to deepen the engagement of high-level champions and political leaders whose resources and political support will be needed for scaling.

We also give considerable thought to the scaling model, such as: policy or practice change at the government level, demand pull (citizen education to demand new products or services), supply push (new products or services made available through new investment or subsidy), micro-franchising, or replication of effort by other entities, among others.

Given the types of issues Synergos is addressing, government has played a particularly key role in replication and scaling. In many contexts, we have been able to use our pilot projects as a way to help governments see what works (without having to provide the upfront capital and time investment) and then to work with government to incorporate the approach into broader policies and plans.

8. Work multiple levels simultaneously

In order to bring about broad-based systems changes, we have learned to work at multiple levels simultaneously, targeting effort in three areas: macro (top leadership, policy), mezzo (mid-level management and oversight) and micro (field-level delivery). We have likewise found it useful to create linkages between work at these different levels. To work only at the micro level is to achieve results at limited scale without enabling across-the board performance gains. To work only at the macro level may bring about changes that are not informed by field-level realities or by what is known to actually function on the ground. Ignoring the mezzo-level leaves out the band of managers and organizations charged with achieving front-line results.

For example, in Namibia, we found that in order to bring about downstream changes at the clinical level (reducing maternal mortality by getting women into ante-natal care), we had to address challenges upstream (top-team leadership alignment and regional implementation capacity). What emerged was three interconnected workstreams involving: leadership development and strategic support for the top leaders in the Namibian Ministry of Health and Social Service (macro level), the creation of Delivery Units within each region of the country to overcome obstacles and to implement new programs to improve maternal health care (mezzo level) and the field-level deployment of new interventions on maternal health (micro level) such as decentralizing ante-natal care, community radio programming for maternal health information, improved transportation systems to get women into care, among others. We created a dashboard system and other communication tools to enable top-level leaders to gather information from the field-level and for the field level, through greater linkages upwards to regional management, to communicate data and insights upwards to senior leadership.

9. Shift the institutional arrangements

What is systems change and how do we know that a system has been changed? We have wrestled deeply with this question at Synergos. There are many dimensions to systems change, and we have learned that one major component of shifting systems has to do with changes in what we call "institutional arrangements" or the creation of altogether new institutions. In Namibia, enabling the Ministry of Health and Social Services to become more responsive to citizen needs, more open to feedback, and more able to change practice as a result of data and client input is an example of a new institutional arrangement. The creation of Delivery Units within the Ministry to listen, solve problems, and to implement new solutions is also example of the same.

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Each of our major partnerships has resulted in the creation of a new organization, the reorganization of an existing organization, or the reframing of the nature of relationships between key stakeholders so as to unlock new commitment, innovation and action. In Ethiopia, a new quasi-governmental organization, called the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency, has been created to support the Ministry of Agriculture on a major reform and productivity effort. In India, we created the Bhavishya Alliance, a registered Indian trust with a mandate to carry on efforts to address child nutrition issues by drawing on input and resources from government, business and civil society. In Canada, we helped establish the Ahp-Cii-Uk Society, a Canadian charitable organization, designed to continue the long process of community engagement and relationship building between First Nations and others in Canadian society.

10. Measure the tangible as well as the intangible

Measurement is always tricky in multi-stakeholder partnerships since different stakeholders care about measuring different things. What is to be measured is not always obvious and is often best formulated as a result of a dialogue among key stakeholders. In many of our projects we have developed an approach that in essence measures two different kinds of outcomes.

It is critical to track both the pragmatic, tangible changes on the ground (e.g. income, nutrition, crop yields, maternal health, etc.) as well as factors that may be somewhat less tangible but equally important (e.g. new institutional arrangements, relationships, changes in attitude, leadership, community resiliency, etc.). Tangible changes are important in themselves and are essential to keeping the interest of donors, partners, and engaged communities. At the same time, such tangible changes, while meaningful and important, may be short lived in the absence of more fundamental shifts or new institutional arrangements.

In Canada, we had with us representatives from the involved First Nations as well as from various federal and provincial government agencies. It was critical for the government to track issues such as economic changes in the communities as well as specific health-related outcomes. Communities meanwhile cared more about tracking issues like cultural continuity and hope for the future. We crafted a monitoring and evaluation system that looked at both sets of factors and also tracked the changes in perception and relationships between First Nations, government, and business actors.

Conclusion

The human challenges facing us are massive, growing and urgent. Many of our challenges - child-nutrition, public health, agriculture and the welfare of indigenous people among them - arise from a complex interplay of social, economic, political and historic forces that are embedded in systems that are often resistant to change. If we are to achieve lasting results at scale, we somehow need to shift underlying patterns and systems. One approach is to reach across boundaries and to creatively combine the resources of government, the market know-how of business, the social connectivity of civil society, and the wisdom of communities. At the end of the day, we need one another more than we know.[4]

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[4] Adapted from New Partnerships for Child Nutrition, written by John Heller, *Alliance Magazine*, December 1, 2007