

Focus :

CONVERGENCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

WORKSHOP

[CP6]

Room Bill Drayton
Palais Brongniart

Thursday september
20th septembre 2012

ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY FOR MULTI-ACTOR PARTNERSHIPS

MAIN FINDINGS

Faced with the scale of the deep questions that society is facing, as well as the scale of growing economic restraints, multi-actor partnerships (private, public and the voluntary sector) are turning out to be absolutely indispensable. Through a pooling of competencies and abilities, they allow for the common interest to be co-constructed while also responding to the issues and constraints of each one of the actors: they address issues such as a new rationale behind public investment, funding constraints for the voluntary sector, scaling up association projects, the inclusion of poorer populations in 'conventional' consumption circuits and they provide a response to the CSR requirements of businesses. However, trust, transparency and risk taking are required in order for this closer collaboration to reach its aims.

SPEAKERS

Karim Ben Slimane

Assistant Professor in Organisational Theory, ESC
Troyes

Lionel Bodin

Senior manager, Accenture Development
Partnerships

Benjamin Cavalli

"Programme Malin" Project Manager, French Red
Cross

Laurie Delluc

"Programme Malin" Junior Project Officer,
Blédina

Florence Gilbert

Executive Director, Voiture & Co

François Rouvier

CSR, VP sustainable mobility, social business,
Renault

MODERATOR

Charles-Benoît Heidsieck

Founder and Chairman, Le Rameau

SUMMARY OF INTERVENTIONS

The conditions for innovating together

Florence Gilbert, Executive Director of Voiture&Co, has been leading work to develop the association and its 11 mobility platforms since 2006. In the space of five years, the organization has gone from 6 to 70 employees and has integrated Group SOS. She highlights that at this stage in its development, there is a pressing need to co-construct the future of Voiture&Co in order to scale it up as a project. A new partner therefore allows a process of questioning to be undertaken as well one of a shared analysis of the relevance and feasibility of scaling up operations. Talks between Voiture&Co and Renault were opened two and a half years ago, and have allowed for the emergence of the Mobiliz project, which aims to facilitate mobility access for those in an unstable life situation. In line with its CSR policy, Renault intended to carry out a reflection process on the question of mobility and its consequences on access to employment.

François Rouvier, Social Business and Road Safety Manager at Renault, notes that his company has a great deal of experience in co-construction as a result of its well-known mergers, but given the fact that the new partners are from the voluntary sector, this gives a new dimension to this experience, which is still at a stage at which a lot is to be learnt. From the outset, both partners had shared ambitions and values, but this type of partnership requires time being spent on the partners learning about one another in order to identify how mutual value can be created while listening to each other and showing humility.

Benjamin Cavalli presented Projet Malin, which aims to reduce the cost of feeding children for families with modest means, while also offering them nutrition education programs. This project was created as the result of a triple observation: donation strategies are subject to severe funding constraints; they reach a limited number of people and can play a part in bringing about exclusion. The project brings together roughly ten partners including the Red Cross and Blédina (Danone Group). Laurie Delluc, head of the Blédina skills-based sponsorship project for Projet Malin, points out that the human factor is essential in ensuring the success of a partnership of this type. The task of co-construction demands a great capacity for adaptation and mutual

trust from all those in charge of the different entities that make up the project.

Lionel Bodin works for the Accenture Development Partnerships social business, dealing with setting up multi-actor partnerships in France and abroad. He insists on the need for clear objectives but also on the need to prepare an exit strategy right from the beginning of the partnership. It is therefore essential to analyze the ecosystem of actors early on, and to create a sense of community surrounding the project in order to allow it to evolve in the long term. Furthermore, the project leaders should identify problems and possible deficiencies early on in order to bring bothersome questions to the fore.

In order to create and to maintain this trust among partners, Karim Ben Slimane, a researcher at ESC Troyes who has studied Projet Malin, lists a number of solutions: meet up regularly, seek cohesiveness in working practices and allow for a great deal of flexibility, ensure that visions and ways of acting are shared in order to understand them better.

Deepening reflections on economic models

One of the underlying questions surrounding these partnerships are how one moves from experimentation to standardizing action. As Benjamin Cavalli, head of Projet Malin within the Red Cross points out, this involves finding a sustainable economic model. He highlights the fact that full commitment from partners is needed in order for the goal to be reached. Work was carried out with Blédina across the whole of the value chain, requiring great transparency, particularly regarding production costs. The aim for the business is to compensate for any shortfall through an increase in volume in accordance with the *no loss, no profit* principle. In this project, the investment strategy has been led by Caisse des Dépôts (350,000 euros invested), in order to create a leverage effect while allowing long-term costs to be avoided. The aim of Projet Malin is to work towards financial autonomy firstly by bringing together and setting in motion a network of local actors, and secondly by mobilizing local collectivities who will then be able to offer their competencies.

François Rouvier also insists on the need to ensure that projects can be replicated and scaled up. What's more, the professionalism and development ambitions of

Voiture&Co seduced the Renault teams. They soon realized that in order to add to the number of mobility platforms on offer, large financial investment would be essential. Since then, the company has set up an investment fund which aims to fund innovations to help the most destitute with mobility, and Voiture&Co is the first beneficiary of this program.

The future: Ideas for moving forward?

Karim Ben Slimane stresses that the world of academia has a responsibility to train young graduates, helping them to adapt to a world which increasingly favors building bridges between stakeholders. The world of academia can be an incubator for new tools and ways of thinking which are linked to issues surrounding social innovation.

Lionel Bodin stresses the fact that there is a great deal of work to be done in terms of raising awareness on the fact that realistic strategies have to be created which are in line with the interests of each stakeholder. A neutral stance has to be taken with regards to the organization, whether or not it be a private one, since the organization itself is best placed to intervene in each step of the value chain, regardless of the fields of activity and sectors traditionally attributed to these actors. Multi-actor partnerships require creativity and ambition. Lionel Bodin therefore advises us to broaden our horizons and to take inspiration from initiatives from further afield, following a strategy of reverse innovation.

SUMMARY OF AUDIENCE EXCHANGE

What is the role of beneficiaries in setting up these partnerships and their governance?

According to Benjamin Cavalli, this is a vital topic because impacted families are in the best position to guide the project. In order to bring this about, Projet Malin stakeholders choose local partners, such as the Red Cross, who are already leading innovative co-construction strategies with the beneficiaries.

Is it not risky for an association working for the common good to associate itself with businesses?

Lionel Bodin notes that a thorough approach can be seen in the world of private business. Companies have an increasingly strategic approach to their role as actors in the fight against poverty. Benjamin Cavalli adds that it would be dangerous to maintain the barriers between business and the voluntary sector because, if that were to be the case, associations would only be able to patch up the damage after it has been caused and respond to the existing shortcomings. What's more, for many people it is easier to go to a supermarket to try and feed oneself as opposed to going to a voluntary organization. **Being able to 'eat normally' is part and parcel of maintaining people's dignity. It is therefore at an upstream stage that the voluntary sector has to work, doing so alongside companies.**

Are there exchange platforms which allow businesses and associations to meet up in order to think up possible ways of collaborating?

The *Mecenova* platform is a resource centre which aims to facilitate partnerships between businesses and associations which work for the common good. The website offers a number of publications on this topic as well as news, examples of innovative partnerships, a database of businesses and associations and a directory of expert bodies.

REPORTER

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IMS-Entreprendre pour la Cité

MORE ON THIS TOPIC

- **Be-Linked, Coordination SUD, MEDEF (2010)**, « Entreprises et ONG de solidarité internationale : Quels partenariats pour quels objectifs ? » : http://publications.medef.com/guide/Guide_Entreprises_et_ONG.pdf
- **CHORUM-CIDES Le Rameau (2011)**, « Référentiel : Les partenariats associations-entreprises » : www.convergences2015.org/Content/biblio/Referentiel%20Partenariat_Jan%202012.pdf
- **IMS-Entreprendre pour la Cité (2011)**, « Grandes entreprises et entrepreneurs sociaux : ensemble pour répondre aux besoins à la Base de la Pyramide » : <http://france.ashoka.org/grandes-entreprises-et-entrepreneurs-sociaux-ensemble-pour-r%C3%A9pondre-aux-besoins-%C3%A0-la-base-de-la-pyra>
- **UN Global Compact (2011)**, “Catalyzing transformational partnerships between the United Nations and business” : www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/un_business_partnerships/Catalyzing_Transformational_Partnerships.pdf
- **Mecenova**: www.mecenova.org