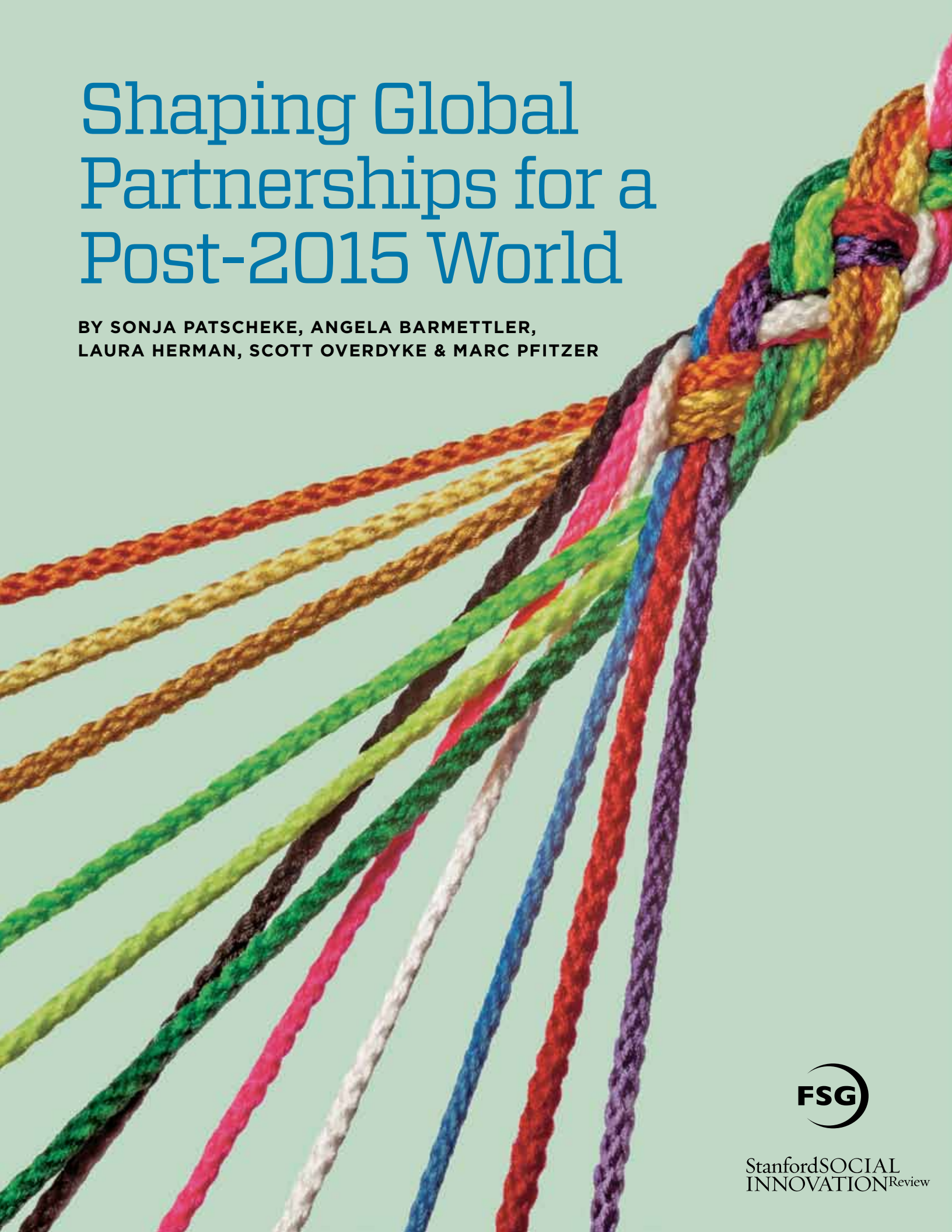
Shaping Global Partnerships for a Post-2015 World

BY SONJA PATSCHEKE, ANGELA BARMETTLER, LAURA HERMAN, SCOTT OVERDYKE & MARC PFITZER



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ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

Global partnerships have an essential role to play in advancing the post-2015 development agenda. This article explores lessons and best practices from six diverse initiatives on how to develop a common agenda, operate effective shared measurement systems, support and coordinate activities, facilitate communication and provide strong governance for global collaborative efforts. It offers important new insights for leaders and funders on how to build successful cross-sector partnerships from the global to the local level.

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Shaping Global Partnerships for a Post-2015 World

The principles of collective impact offer important lessons for architects of global collaborative efforts

BY SONJA PATSCHEKE, ANGELA BARMETTLER, LAURA HERMAN, SCOTT OVERDYKE & MARC PFITZER

"What if fishermen, governments, industry, philanthropy, private investors, and conservation and development organizations worked together to apply the best strategies for restoring fisheries—and the communities that depend on them? What if these strategies addressed all the key elements of a fishery... so that change is comprehensive and lasting? What if fisheries became the sustainability success story of the early 21st century, creating more food, better livelihoods, prosperous businesses, and healthier oceans?"

These visionary questions articulated by the newly launched 50in10 initiative to support the World Bank's Global Partnership for Oceans paint a picture of optimism and potential that aspirational leaders share when thinking about tackling the world's most pressing problems. To achieve its goal of restoring 50 percent of the world's fisheries in 10 years, a range of actors must work collaboratively to affect large-scale system change. Yet, no clear road map exists to translate this daunting vision into a pragmatic and effective global partnership. How does an initiative with such a bold goal as 50in10 create a partnership strategy and structure that works at the global, regional, and local level?

Progress on the post-2015 development agenda hinges on answering such a question. But the development field is littered with aspirational partnerships that fall short of executing their ambitious goals. Common pitfalls include disconnects between the global strategy and local implementation, a lack of shared measurement systems, and insufficient structures to manage the complexity. Despite much talk about the essential role of partnerships in advancing global development, best practices remain elusive and poorly documented.

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Undoubtedly, achieving key outcomes in health, education, economic development, and environmental sustainability requires working together across sectors in new and more effective ways. Too many isolated or sub-scale efforts fail due to partnership approaches incommensurate with the complexity of global challenges. What's needed is effective cross-sector collaboration that mobilizes the international community while also driving measurable progress on the ground. As we think about how global partnerships work best for sustainable global development beyond 2015, we believe that the concept of collective impact offers important lessons for the architects of the post-2015 world.

Actors around the world have been experiencing the power of collective impact and its five conditions of success.[1] The most important condition is establishing a backbone structure that acts as the glue, holding the partners together and ensuring that the other four conditions are in place. The backbone provides strategic coherence around the *common agenda*, establishes *shared measurement* and learning systems, supports the *mutually reinforcing activities* of the different partners, and facilitates continuous *communication*. It needs to provide strong leadership for the initiative while building ownership among the different partners like a conductor of a symphony

allowing each participating organization to bring their particular strengths to the joint effort. Of course, the prerequisite of having a functioning support infrastructure is adequate funding. Funders of collective impact efforts have understood that it is precisely by investing sufficiently into the right backbone support that the partners will be able to achieve "more with less."

Over the last few years, we have studied and worked with many local collective impact initiatives that are helping solve a social problem within a specific community, city, region, or country. We now seek to answer the questions we keep hearing from the global development community: How does collective impact apply to cross-sector partnerships at the global level? What is different for global partnerships? What are best practices for leading and managing global partnerships?

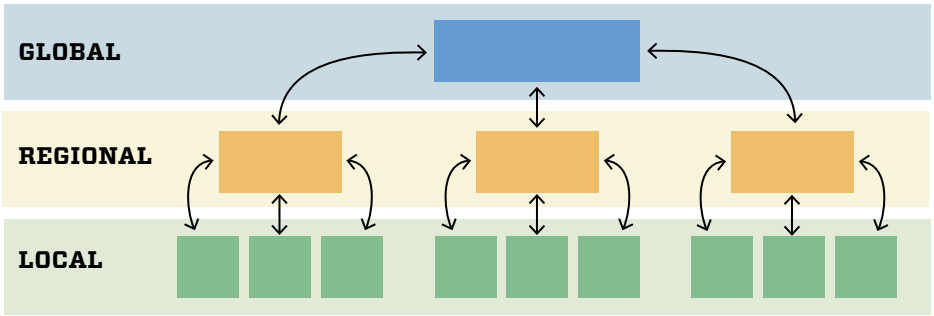
To address these questions, we used a collective impact lens to research and evaluate a range of global partnerships, with a particular emphasis on six diverse initiatives: Roll Back Malaria Partnership, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, Global Road Safety Partnership, the World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture, Global Partnership for Education, and World Wide Fund for Nature. (See "Featured Initiatives.")

Featured Initiatives

The **Roll Back Malaria Partnership** is on track towards saving 4.2 million lives by 2015 through the more than 500 partners united behind its Global Malaria Action Plan	The **Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition** has already improved the nutrition of about 750 million people and is aiming to reach 1 billion people by 2015	The **Global Road Safety Partnership** creates and supports multi-sector partnerships to implement the United Nation's Decade of Action for Road Safety, with the goal to prevent 5 million road crash deaths by 2020	The **World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture** has helped achieve commitments of more than $5.7 billion by private and public partners that could impact more than 9.5 million smallholder farmers in the next three to five years	The **Global Partnership for Education** has helped 21.8 million children access primary education and helped raise primary school completion rates in GPE countries from 61 percent in 2002 to 75 percent in 2011	The **World Wide Fund for Nature** contributed to achieving $400 million in commitments to establish the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF) in the western Pacific Ocean

Not surprisingly, the most successful global partnerships already embody the five conditions of success. Take the Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM), for example, whose efforts to control malaria in Africa have saved an estimated 1.2 million lives since 2000. Or the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) that can be credited with improving the nutritional content of food for an estimated 750 million people over the last decade. In each instance, partners from different sectors work through mutually reinforcing activities towards a common vision of success supported by shared measurement and efficient communication systems.

Multi-Layered Backbone Structure



As with other collective impact efforts, RBM and GAIN both work through backbone organizations as their central nervous system. What's different is that these global partnerships have a multi-layered backbone structure where each layer plays a distinct role. Since partners contribute to different work streams in different locations—with some being mainly active at the global level and others focusing in specific geographies—coordination needs to happen at multiple levels. The global backbone generally focuses on defining a high level framework for action toward a common agenda and defining shared metrics while the local backbone organizations coordinate implementing partners on the ground in specific locations. And for some partnerships, an additional regional layer serves between the global and local levels to help the flow of expertise and information throughout the system. (See "Multi-Layered Backbone Structure.")

Despite the many successes already achieved through improved collaboration, not even the strongest partnerships have mastered this required division of labor. Getting the public, private and non-profit sectors to work together is in itself a challenge, and the need for coordination

at multiple levels adds another layer of complexity.

To better understand this division of labor for global partnerships, we examined the key roles of the global, regional, and local backbones for each core element of collective impact. It is our hope that these findings will provide guidance to the leaders and funders of global partnerships to enable them to reach their full potential. (See "Key Roles of Backbones to Ensure Success.")

COMMON AGENDA

Leading an agenda-setting process | Committing to a common agenda is the first step in developing an effective global partnership. In a post-2015 world, global partnerships cannot be merely issue or theme-based initiatives, but will require focused strategies and execution plans. The global backbone serves as the lynchpin for developing this common agenda. It offers a dedicated team to convene the core partners and facilitate the strategy development process. At this stage it is crucial that all key stakeholders can share their perspectives on the boundary of the problem and potential solutions to ensure that the common agenda considers the interests and expertise of all relevant partners. Only then will the partnership and the global backbone have the legitimacy to lead the global effort and act as the steward of the common agenda. Getting a diverse group of actors from different sectors to agree on a common agenda for a complex issue is not easy, yet is a very important initial step toward building understanding and trust among the partners.

The World Economic Forum (the Forum) successfully facilitated the development of a common agenda during the launch of the New Vision for Agriculture. The team spent six months meeting with governments, agri-businesses, investors, farmer groups, development agencies, and civil society groups to make the case for action and agree on the core issue to address. Once the boundaries of the issue were set, it took another year to develop a strategy to guide the partners' actions. The resulting agenda contains a three-pronged vision for change that encourages a holistic approach to agricultural development by addressing food security, environmental sustainability, and economic opportunity. Today, four years after its inception, the New Vision for Agriculture has engaged more than 250 organizations and catalyzed transformational, cross-sector partnerships in 14 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Most global health and development challenges are active in far-flung locations, so actors need to agree where the partnership will focus its efforts. We've found that the exact selection criteria for geographic focus will vary by organization according to their mission, operating environment, and the type of issue in question. However, partners usually focus on locations where the problem is most severe and that display a high readiness for change, including having local issue champions and adequate financial resources available to get started.

In road safety, for example, the challenge is enormous: every year, nearly 1.3 million people die as a result of road traffic collisions and 20 to 50 million more people sustain non-fatal injuries. To help reduce the number of fatalities, the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) was founded in 1999, on the initiative of the World Bank, to work toward sustainably reducing death and injury on the roads in low- and middle-income countries, where 90 percent of road traffic deaths occur. The partnership selected its focus countries primarily based on the incidence of road fatalities, supplemented with more practical considerations of the probability of success: the government's recognition of the problem and willingness to act, the existence of adequate financial resources to support the initiative, and strong leadership from an influential road safety champion. In those countries GRSP works closely with governments to set up cross-

Key Roles of Backbones to Ensure Success

	GLOBAL	REGIONAL	LOCAL
Common Agenda	◆Drive and fund strategy development process ◆Act as steward of the common agenda ◆Prioritize countries/ places for interventions	◆Support countries in creating local strategies (by translating global strategy)	◆Translate global strategy into local strategy and activities ◆Align existing plans/ activities
Shared Measurement	◆Establish a shared measurement system ◆Aggregate, interpret and share data ◆Identify key areas for learning ◆Provide technical assistance to local backbone/partners	◆Identify trends in specific regions ◆Facilitate learning across countries/ regions ◆Provide technical assistance to local backbone/partners	◆Collect, interpret and share data ◆Facilitate learning across partners
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	◆Mobilize and coordinate actors at the global and regional levels ◆Raise funds to support activities ◆Support implementation through technical assistance		◆Mobilize actors at the local level ◆Coordinate activities, convene partners ◆Raise funds to support local activities
Communication	◆Encourage communication and knowledge sharing within the partnership ◆Ensure strong communication channels between different backbone levels ◆Create and maintain a sense of urgency with funders and partners ◆Advocate for policy change		◆Encourage communication and knowledge sharing among local actors ◆Promote external communications with different stakeholders

sector partnerships, build the capacity of local road safety police and officials, collect and share global best practices, and advocate for supportive legal frameworks.

Translating the agenda to local contexts | Of course, a common agenda at the global level means nothing unless it gets translated into locally adapted strategies and activities. This process has to be driven by the local backbone and in-country actors since they understand the local context best. The global backbone can help by offering technical support when needed. GRSP works through a network of advisors from either their own local offices or from the global backbone office, who work closely with the relevant ministries in-country on the design and implementation of locally-tailored road safety strategies. These reflect the framework of the "Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020," the global call to action by the United Nations, as well as local conditions on the ground.

SHARED MEASUREMENT

Driving consensus on shared measurement | Once partners unite behind a common agenda, the next step is to design a shared measurement system, which is central to any collective impact effort. Shared measurement is not just about defining and tracking key development indicators, it is also about putting a stake in the ground to define the goals and metrics used to evaluate progress and to design a process for learning from the data that is collected. It is the ultimate test of whether the partnership truly shares a common agenda. Importantly, the shared measurement process needs to be designed with a strong focus on sharing insights and best practices throughout the system as partners are learning what works and what doesn't work on the ground.

The global backbone, as the steward of the common agenda, is best positioned to create consensus on a common measurement system and key performance metrics. Look at the Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM), launched in 1998 to mobilize coordinated action against malaria worldwide. The global secretariat was tasked with the creation of the Global Malaria Action Plan (GMAP) to eradicate malaria. This global framework for action defines the partnership's objectives and strategy and estimates the annual funding needs to achieve RBM's goals for 2015 and beyond. To assess the global malaria disease burden and set the partnership's objectives, RBM engaged in a two-year consultative process with global health actors including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (the Global Fund). It then helped establish common metrics for all countries for key indicators such as the delivery of bed nets and rapid diagnostic tests and treatments, to facilitate the aggregation and interpretation of data.

Collecting and compiling relevant data | Again, it is at the local level where the shared measurement plan needs to trigger action. While a global measurement framework may recommend a set of indicators, those measures may not be readily available at the local level. It is the local backbone's role to ensure that the appropriate data is collected from all in-country partners. In the case of malaria, the national ministries of health perform the local backbone functions and make sure all relevant data is collected and compiled into quarterly reports that appear on RBM's website, allowing actors at any level of the partnership to track country by country progress in terms of expenditure and interventions.

A regional backbone structure can be a helpful middle layer between the global and the local levels. As the first aggregation point beyond the local level, RBM's four Sub-Regional Networks (SRNs) in East, West, Central and Southern Africa are well positioned to spot trends and bottlenecks by monitoring regular inflows of country data. They extract and share key learnings from across the network at their annual meetings and support countries in reviewing and updating their national plans based on the best available strategies and practices.

To systematize the learning process across all levels of the partnership, RBM convenes two types of working groups organized around specific areas of functional expertise. The first type, the "alignment" working groups, enables partners to reach consensus and agree on best practices regarding different problems, such as malaria in pregnancy. The second type, "coordination" working groups, focuses on implementing these best practices in the different areas of RBM's work through the SRN planning cycles.

The complexity of global partnerships and the issues they address also calls for a level of pragmatism in measurement. Where possible, efforts seek to take advantage of data already being collected in a standardized way for other purposes. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE), for example, uses common frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All Goals to help define its ultimate objectives in expanding access to education. When it comes to measurement, it utilizes existing education data captured locally and internationally by organizations such as UNESCO to measure progress against national education plans and identify opportunities for improvement. If necessary, GPE funds technical assistance to help assess and improve measurement systems

> In a post-2015 world, global partnerships will require focused strategies and execution plans. The global backbone serves as the lynchpin for developing this common agenda.

at the national level to improve the quality of the data. (See "Progress Monitoring v. Impact Assessments.")

MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES

Tackling intransient global development challenges in a post-2015 world requires harnessing the best efforts of partners from all sectors in pursuit of a common agenda. In a collective impact effort, the backbone infrastructure coordinates partners' contributions to ensure that all activities are complementary and mutually reinforcing, leading to progress toward the shared objectives. The local backbone's core functions are mobilizing partners and coordinating activities on the ground. The global and regional backbones can support implementation by mobilizing and coordinating partners at the global and regional level, raising funds for activities, and providing technical assistance.

Mobilizing funding and supporting partner activities | The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is a powerful example of how a global organization can raise funds to support activities and help mobilize and coordinate a diverse group of actors around a common vision. GAIN was launched in 2002 to improve access to nutritious foods on a global scale by supporting the development of public-private partnerships. Itself an alliance of governments, civil society groups, private sector companies, and international organizations, GAIN serves as a funder, implementer, and convener for nutrition-based projects in more than 30 countries around the world.

Since its inception, GAIN has mobilized hundreds of millions of dollars for nutrition from global actors. Yet, funding alone is not enough. GAIN also strengthens the infrastructure on the ground to help implementation and ultimately, improve the nutritional status of key populations. For its Food Fortification Program, GAIN builds the infrastructure through the creation of and support for a national cross-sector group known as a national fortification alliance (NFA). The NFA is a collection of representatives from government, private sector including food processing industries (e.g., oil refineries, flour millers, and salt factories), civil society, international agencies, development agencies, and academia. NFAs are initially coordinated by an "executing agent," an independent organization contracted by GAIN to implement food fortification activities. The executing agent is tasked with laying the groundwork for the cross-sector partnership, helping to build consensus around a common agenda, and providing oversight to food fortification programs.

The NFA comprises working groups to provide oversight of the work to fortify food that requires parallel progress along a number of different fronts. A common fixture in many collective impact efforts, working groups are typically organized by subject or functional area and bring together partners working on similar activities. In Kenya, for example, the national NFA includes five working groups, or committees—the Product Delivery Committee, Communications Committee, Policy and Advocacy Committee, Monitoring & Evaluation Committee, and Finance Committee. Each committee is led by the subject or functional expert of the group. For instance, the Communications Committee is led by Population Services International (PSI), allowing the broader alliance to benefit from PSI's expertise in public advocacy as well as its recognition within civil society. Similarly, the other working groups leverage the skills of their members to promote activities across the food system—from food quality standards and enforcement mechanisms to manufacturing investments and transportation infrastructure. Thus, civil society groups help to build community awareness and drive demand for fortified foods; private industry works on producing and supplying the necessary products and services; the Ministry of Health determines the local health needs; and donors spot gaps in the system and seek linkages with other programs.

GAIN's global backbone not only funds the initial creation of NFA's and supports grants implemented by the executing agents in managing the food fortification activities, but also provides technical assistance to governments, the working group leaders, private sector partners and many of the local stakeholders on an as-needed basis. This could come in the form of direct support

Progress Monitoring v. Impact Assessment

Measurement systems and processes are often weak because there is confusion about the purpose of measurement. Shared measurement in collective efforts focuses on a small set of key indicators that are shared among all partners in order to track the partnership's progress, make sure that activities remain aligned, promote learning, and establish accountability.

Multiple forms of measurement exist. Two of the more common ones are:

- Progress Monitoring: Indicators are tracked frequently and serve to inform strategic adjustments and action on an ongoing basis.
- Impact Assessment: Progress monitoring can be supplemented by selected in-depth impact studies that investigate specific questions about the effectiveness of different approaches and their longer-term impact to inform major strategic revisions.

In most instances, the global backbone is best positioned to commission these in-depth studies and share findings with partners. Individually, partners in global efforts will continue to measure what is important to their organization's mission which may go well beyond the agreed upon shared indicators of the partnership.

from GAIN's specialists at the global level or through the activation of an extensive network of global nutrition consultants that GAIN calls upon for facilitation and technical assistance. By leveraging the diversity of experience and knowledge of external consultants, GAIN is able to maintain a relatively lean organizational structure while operating in dozens of countries across the world. (For another example of an alliance see "The Coral Triangle Initiative.")

The Coral Triangle Initiative

In instances when a global collective impact effort focuses on one specific geographic area, the regional backbone of a global partnership may be well placed to take the lead in mobilizing funds and providing technical support. One example is the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) Coral Triangle Initiative that works toward sustainable management of marine resources in the Coral Triangle, an area spanning six countries in the western Pacific Ocean that includes 76 percent of the world's coral species.

The first step in the process of launching this effort consisted of mobilizing funding and support from all six governments in the Coral Triangle region, as well as a variety of donors. More than $400 million has been committed to establish the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF), an intergovernmental platform for the regional initiative that now acts as the central backbone for the initiative.

In order to gain the commitments of key actors, WWF outlined the benefits of regional cooperation to achieve progress on individual agendas by specifically responding to the priorities of the six regional governments, as well as international donors such as USAID and the Asian Development Bank. For example, WWF and the CTI-CFF development partners showed how the health of the oceans is closely linked to food security, sustainable livelihoods, and economic benefits for the 360 million people living in the region.

From the moment the intergovernmental platform was set up, WWF started supporting the implementation of the CTI-CFF Regional Plan of Action by providing technical advice to the CTI-CFF. As a formal development partner, WWF participates in CTI-CFF's organizational and governance meetings, as well as thematic working group meetings and National Coordination Committees (local backbones), all channels through which it can provide guidance on specific technical and strategic issues.

COMMUNICATION

Sharing knowledge and building trust | Achieving success in global partnerships requires connecting partners from different cultures, time zones, and often languages. Actors from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors sometimes have very different organizational cultures and ways of doing things which means it can take longer to build a common understanding among one another. The backbones of global partnerships hence have a crucial role to encourage and orchestrate communication across the partnership to align activities, share knowledge, and build trust.

RBM does this to a large degree through its Sub-Regional Networks. Their annual meetings exemplify the power of convening as a mechanism for knowledge sharing bottom-up, top-down, and across countries. They provide a neutral platform for key country actors to meet their counterparts from other countries in the same region as well as representatives from the working groups and regional and global backbones to share experiences, learn from each other, and build relationships. Twice a year, the SRN organizes support missions to each country involving relevant partners from the global network to meet with in-country partners. In addition, SRNs organize peer-learning visits between countries and regions to accelerate the exchange of best practices.

Frequent communication—both formal and informal—is essential to building trust among partners, without which any collaborative effort fails. In the field of malaria, actors report feeling part of "one big family," with strong personal relationships holding the group together, largely as a result of their structured, regular communication.

Influencing policy | Global partnerships are not self-contained units that operate in isolation. Their success depends on their ability to navigate a dynamic system of funders, thought leaders, issue experts, and other efforts promoting their cause. They therefore need disciplined external communication to create and maintain a sense of urgency on the key issues as well as to affect policy changes to build an enabling environment.

The global backbone is often best placed to take the lead on external communication using its channels of influence at the global level and lending its credibility to support in-country efforts. GAIN, for instance, effectively leverages its technical expertise in nutrition as well as its close relationships with governments to help inform global policies related to nutrition such as the food fortification guidelines of the WHO. Instead of advocating directly for a certain position, GAIN positions itself as a partner and technical expert to those government actors tasked with setting international nutrition policy. GAIN has thus become a go-to organization in helping policymakers interpret data for decision-making. Similarly, in-country, a core initial focus for GAIN, the executing agent and the National Fortification Alliance (NFA) is to engage in evidence-based advocacy with the government for mandatory food fortification

legislation as the key enabling condition to achieve food fortification at scale.

Similarly, the World Economic Forum (the Forum) has effectively maintained a sense of urgency for the New Vision for Agriculture. In an effort to align partners around its initial strategy, the Forum team leveraged global platforms such as the G8 and G20 as well as its extensive relationships with multinational companies across different sectors. Today, the New Vision for Agriculture continues to advocate on behalf of smallholder farmers around the world and the more than 870 million people who remain chronically hungry and undernourished.

Regional backbones also have a role to play in maintaining momentum. As part of the New Vision for Agriculture, the Forum helped incubate the regional backbone Grow Africa as a response to tremendous demand from countries in Sub-Saharan Africa interested in replicating the success of Tanzania's agricultural corridor program, SAGCOT.[2] Through its participation in global and regional agricultural forums, Grow Africa seeks to increase the visibility and viability of investment opportunities in African agricultural value chains. To date, the platform has secured more than $5 billion in investment commitments, and supports efforts in nine countries. Coordinated by the Africa Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Forum, Grow Africa connects pioneering governments, businesses, investors, smallholders, and development partners to align on common goals and commitments. Beyond convening investors, government representatives and agri-businesses at their annual investment forum, the platform has recently launched an annual report documenting private sector commitments, investments, and accomplishments in improving African agriculture in the participating countries. This report helps to hold companies and organizations accountable for their commitments in the region and showcases them for others to follow.

STRONG GOVERNANCE

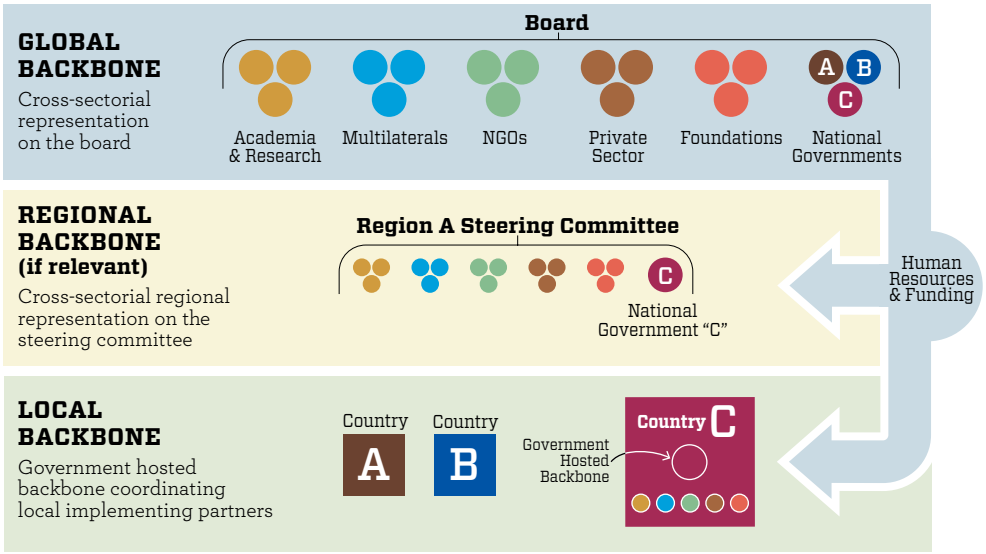
Ensuring legitimacy and effective linkages | While strong governance is an important aspect of any collective impact effort, the multiple backbone structures required in global partnerships necessitate heightened attention. A carefully designed governance structure is the fundamental building block of a global partnership and a critical ingredient for meeting post-2015 development goals. At the center of the structure is the global backbone that requires strong legitimacy as the expert coordinator and must be recognized as representing the interests of all partners.

RBM provides an effective model for designing governance bodies across the backbone infrastructure with strong linkages among the different levels. (See "Multi-Layered Governance Model.") At the global level, RBM's Board is made up of 20 voting members and is primarily responsible for setting the strategic direction of the partnership, approving its work plans and budgets, as well as providing oversight of the global Secretariat (backbone). Its members include representatives of academia, malaria endemic countries, foundations, multilaterals, NGOs, OECD donors, and the private sector. Most importantly, malaria endemic countries are duly represented on the board, thus ensuring that decisions made at the global level are grounded in local realities and priorities.

At the regional level, RBM's Sub-regional Networks are governed by steering committees whose co-chairs regularly report to RBM's Board. They are primarily responsible for reviewing and approving the country roadmaps. SRN's steering committees are made up of regional representatives from all main constituencies, the hosting organization, as well as the national program managers of each malaria endemic country of the region. This ensures that regional specificities and country contexts are being taken into account in the decision-making process. SRNs receive their core funding from RBM for staff costs and regional convenings and technical assistance, which reinforces accountability and alignment with the Global Malaria Action Plan.

At the country level, the ministry of health typically coordinates the collective of international and local donors and actors around the national malaria programs by convening them on a regular basis to share information, align plans and activities, reach consensus, and review progress. The local backbone sets up technical committees with specialists from different areas such as diagnosis, vector control, and malaria in pregnancy. These agree on tasks to be performed and monitor implementa-

Multi-Layered Governance Model



tion in their respective thematic areas. RBM links to the in-country collective through the SRN missions and meetings and the malaria focal points of each organization.[3]

Local ownership of the in-country backbone is critical to ensuring buy-in and the long-term viability of the partnership. In the field of malaria, having the ministry of health take the lead role in-country is essential to integrating malaria within the broader national health agenda, thus gaining access to key resources, and supporting a system-level approach to national health.

Governance is of course closely tied to funding flows. GAIN maintains strong oversight of the NFAs it has helped set up by continuing to support grants to executing agents including allocations for the NFA. Executing agents receive on average between $1.5 million and $3 million over 2.5 to 5 years to help set up the NFA and to promote and guide local food fortification until the partnership is well established and the government and private sector take full ownership.

The NFAs themselves are set-up to strengthen their legitimacy and build local ownership. The chairperson of the NFA is elected by the broader membership to guide strategies and to call meetings on behalf of the partnership. Similarly, the working group leaders are all selected by popular vote and each is responsible for coordinating an execution plan around the high level goals set by the NFA membership. The executing agent simply plays a facilitative role in this process. Over time, the local backbone role is being taken over by the relevant ministry to transition to full local ownership.

LESSONS FOR LEADERS AND FUNDERS

With significant gaps in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals imminent, the status quo cannot be the path forward. The problems facing our world and our communities are too massive and too complex for sub-scale and siloed approaches. Complex development problems will not be solved without systemic and dynamic global partnerships.

Leaders and funders focused on a post-2015 development agenda need to embrace this complexity in shaping global partnerships. They need to understand what works in designing and executing global partnerships and incorporate that knowledge into pragmatic structures and processes. And they need to connect global funding and expertise with local resources, implementation capacity, and ownership—all essential for making progress toward our shared goals.

While many existing global partnership leaders successfully use a sub-set of the key building blocks of the architecture described above, we have yet to see any global collaborative effort that has an effective backbone structure across all levels of cooperation. Challenges have included the lack of a workable shared measurement system to foster alignment and shared learning among the partners, and a frequent disconnect between the global level and local implementation.

Just as leaders of global partnerships can improve strategy and execution, funders need to acknowledge the critical role of the backbone structure and provide ongoing support to its development. This includes the governments of implementing countries that in most cases host the local backbone. While it's no question that building the right backbone structure requires funding, many funders still hesitate to spend on infrastructure, instead linking their funds directly to programs. In reality, the investment needed to maintain backbone architecture is often insignificant compared to the total resources that the backbone structure will help channel towards greater impact.

Consider RBM's budget of $18 million in 2011 that supported running their secretariat, governance bodies, working groups, and four SRNs. Compared to the $2 billion in annual total commitments for malaria control and an additional $550 million or more in funding for R&D that RBM was directly or indirectly influencing that year, the cost of funding the RBM backbone is insignificant. While there could certainly be more done to eradicate malaria today, global malaria efforts are on track to meet the malaria community's goal of reducing malaria deaths to near zero by 2015 and, in UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's words, "Roll Back Malaria has proven the power of partnerships to produce sustainable results." Yet, even in the field of malaria where we have a strong backbone system at the global and regional level, there often are inadequate financial and human resources at the country level.

The collective impact framework and the roles of the backbone across the different levels of organization offer a blueprint for diagnosing global partnerships along the key functions of strategy, measurement, implementation, and communication. With an eye toward continuous improvement, backbone leaders and funders of global partnerships have much to learn from each other. Engaging in dialogue and learning exchanges around the structure and role of the backbone can unlock insights and action that will directly impact their partnerships' effectiveness. At the same time, newly created partnerships such as 50in10 can benefit and learn from the experiences of more established partnerships about the intricacies of establishing sufficient and appropriate backbone resources.

At a time when we are discussing the shape of the post-2015 development agenda, let us seize the opportunity to build the right architecture that will empower global partnerships to achieve the transformational change we need for a better future. ◆

1 The five conditions of success for collective impact are: Common Agenda, Shared Measurement, Mutually Reinforcing Activities, Continuous Communication, and Backbone Support. See "Collective Impact", winter 2011 issue of *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, and "Challenging Change: Making Collective Impact Work", winter 2012 issue of *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.

2 Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania

3 In Global Fund supported countries, the Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs) are an additional platform to build local ownerships and to help align partners' expectations and activities in-country.

ABOUT FSG

FSG is a nonprofit consulting firm specializing in strategy, research, and evaluation. We help organizations discover better ways to solve social problems. FSG was founded in 2000 as Foundation Strategy Group, and today works across all sectors in every region of the globe, partnering with foundations, corporations, nonprofits, and governments to achieve social change. Learn more at **www.fsg.org**

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The Collective Impact Forum, an initiative of FSG and the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, is a resource for people and organizations using the collective impact approach to address large-scale social and environmental problems. We aim to increase the effectiveness and adoption of collective impact by providing practitioners with access to the tools, training opportunities, and peer networks they need to be successful in their work. Learn more at **collectiveimpactforum.org**

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