Multi-sector partnerships: A Comparative Perspective

Professor
Sonia Ospina, sonia.ospina@nyu.edu

Teaching Assistant
Laura Ballantyne-Brodie lbb325@nyu.edu

Class schedule
Day 1 Tuesday, May 26 (9-5 pm);
Day 2 Thursday, May 28 (8:30-12:30 pm);
Day 3 Monday, June 1 (8:30-12:30 pm);
Day 4 Wednesday, June 3 (8:30-12:30 pm);
Day 5 Friday, June 5 (8:30-12:30 pm);
Day 6 Monday June 8 (9-5 pm).

Office hours - By appointment

Course Description

Solving today's complex social problems requires considering the perspectives of stakeholders from the public, nonprofit and private sectors. Existing structural and institutional barriers, combined with distinct assumptions, work styles, and disciplinary backgrounds of actors in each domain make collaborative work difficult, particularly when leaders lack the skills and competencies to connect in ways that bridge the gap. Incorporating literature, cases, guest speakers and intervention technologies, the course offers a structure for sustained cycles of dialogue around examples of formal collaborations from several countries around the world. The literature calls these efforts “cross-sector social partnerships” (CSSP) defining them as “cross sector projects formed explicitly to address social issues and causes that actively engage the partners on an ongoing basis” (Selsky & Parker, 2010:22). The focus of the course will be in partnerships where members of the three sectors—government, civil society and business—collaborate, thus the course's name, Multi-sector partnerships (MSPs). We will study partnerships that span geographical contexts, from a comparative perspective. The course encourages students to consider the assumptions of stakeholders from each sector, to clarify and challenge their own assumptions and pre-conceptions in reference to the three sectors and to explore the opportunities and challenges associated with multi-sector collaboration through the lens of evidence-based knowledge of this phenomenon.

Course objectives

At the end of the course students will have the ability to:

1. Recognize the basic components of an effective multi-sector partnership and distinguish among different possible types of collaborations across sectors;
2. Clarify the flow of building a multisectoral partnership and have been exposed to potential tools to facilitate the process (such as the U-process).
3. Recognize and appreciate key assumptions, concepts and paradigms from the public, nonprofit and business perspectives, thus adding new knowledge and tools to their existing repertoire;
4. Analyze cases of value creation through multi-sector collaboration that illustrate the challenges in diverse geographical contexts; and will be able to apply assumptions, concepts and paradigms to illuminate the case they are studying for their final team project.
5. Identify leadership qualities and specific collaborative competencies to develop collective wisdom across diverse settings involving diverse organizations and actors confronting multisector challenges (such as the ability to challenge the self, to be critical of all perspectives, to listen to others’ perspectives openly and to work collaboratively), and will have explored the extent to which they need to build these as part of their repertoire to become bridging leaders across sectors.

**Course Requirements**

1. Active engagement in class exercises and discussions;
2. Assigned reading;
3. Journal entries (based on assigned reading);
4. Final team project paper and presentation; and
5. Individual final reflection paper

**Class Participation**

Much of the learning that takes place in a reading seminar occurs as a result of classroom discussion. Your attendance, and your willingness to prepare in advance and actively participate including practicing the competencies of collaboration in every class will ensure that we create the best possible learning environment.

*Attendance and Lateness Policy* - Attendance at each class session is expected, and given compressed time, students may not miss an entire day. If you miss more than one session within each day (regardless of the reason), you can expect this to have a negative effect on your class participation grade unless previously discussed with the professor. Excessive lateness, or leaving early, will also have a negative effect on your grade. *Missing any half-day is grounds for course failure.*

**Journaling**

- While expected to read all required material, students will choose three readings from each of the morning and afternoon sessions to comment on in the journal.
- Students will link insights from these readings with their own experience, to engage in a self-assessment of their present understanding and capacity of collaborative competencies.
Students are expected to draw implications about the types of competencies required for collaborative work across sectors, exploring the extent of their readiness to use them effectively. Journaling will be an opportunity therefore to engage in an informal reflection on the student’s developmental needs to become an effective collaborative leader.

- Journal entries are not formal writings, but rather thoughtful reflections on the readings to explore how they help illuminate students’ personal experience and self-diagnosis.
- Students hand-in journal entry upon arrival to each class (including the final class)
- **Format:** one paragraph per reading, 1.5 spacing (the journal entries will be no more than two pages for Day 1, and one page for all other days). Include student name and date. No need to write full reference of reading chosen, just refer to it by the last name of the authors and date of article (e.g. Austin (2005) says…)

**Team project**

- Students will choose a case in a particular policy area and join a team of participants with similar preference (see references below);
- The team will write a paper (8-10 pages, double-space) that provides an analysis of each sector’s participation and proposes an alternative scenario. Paper is due on June 22nd (noon).
- Students will present a preliminary version of their work to the class during the session of June 8th. They will hand-in small assignments through out the five days of the course, which will build toward the presentation and paper (see assignments in separate document on Team project posted in NYU Classes). Faculty will be available to work with student groups for half hour after the sessions upon request, and during office hours (see separate document). Students are responsible for continuing to do the work on their own between sessions and after the course ends to ensure final completion of the project.

References for the team project cases:

**Case 1: Senegal's Fight against Malnutrition: The Nutrition Enhancement Program. In:**

**Case 2: Amangwe Village, South Africa. In:**

**Case 3: California's CALFED Water Program. In:**
Final reflection paper

- Each student will write a 3-5 page final reflection paper. We will commence this paper during class.
- Students will then complete the reflective essay out of class, to further incorporate aspects of learning based on the journaling done over the prior days, as well as incorporating readings, class discussions, and guest speakers’ presentations.
- The paper should summarize and further explore the identified student’s developmental needs to become an effective participant of multi-sector partnerships, and suggest strategies to address these needs.
- Students should reference at least 5 readings in the paper, and include a bibliography as an extra page.
- For tips on good writing see the Assignments tab in NYU Classes.
- This paper is due on 15th June by 12pm.

In summary, students must satisfy the following requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements and due dates</th>
<th>Percentage grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Journaling</strong> (20%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- One journaling assignment per day (full days, 6 readings; half-days, 3 readings). Due at the beginning of each day: May 26, 28, June 1, 3, 5 and 8</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team project</strong> (40%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Class presentation – See due dates of small assignments and presentation plan in separate document; presentation delivery due June 8</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Final paper – One pager and work plan due June 5, final paper due June 22 (noon)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual final reflection paper</strong> (20%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identifying developmental needs and strategy to address them. Due on June 15 (noon)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation (20%) – Assessed every day</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL: 100%
### Overview of Course Contents

#### I. The what and why of multi-sector partnerships

**DAY 1** (May 26, blocks 1 and 2): 9 am - 5 pm  
*Morning session (9 am – 12:15 noon)*
1. Introductions and course overview  
2. Creating collective impact in a shared-power world  
*Afternoon session (1:15 pm – 5:00 pm)*
3. Partnerships and Global Governance; Organizing Student Team Projects  
4. Using social technologies to address wicked problems: bridge building across different perspectives  
*Guest speaker: John Heller, Synergos*

#### II. The what and how of multi-sector partnerships: institutional differences and collaboration, parts 1, and 2

**DAY 2** (May 28, block 3): 8:30 am - 12:30 pm  
**Part 1. Building Blocks**
1. Collaborating across sectors: motivations, risks, benefits, barriers and roles  
**DAY 3** (June 1, block 4): 8:30 am - 12:30 pm  
**Part 2. Architecture and Processes**
2. Governance (with capital G): challenges and the inter-organizational life cycle  
*Guest Speaker: Surita Sandosham, Synergos – The Civil Society Perspective*
**DAY 4: (June 3, block 5): 8:30 am - 12:30 pm**  
**Part 2 (Continued from Day 3)**
3. Governance (with small g), accountability and leadership (Multi-sector partnerships at work)  
*Guest Speaker: Neil Britto, The Intersector Project*

#### III. The so-what of multi-sector partnerships

**DAY 5** (June 5, block 6): 8:30 am – 12:30 pm  
**Part 1. Meaningful Partnerships**
1. Transitions, transformations, exits and lessons: when and how to move on  
*Guest Speaker: Mark Linton, Former ED, Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative SC2 – The Government Perspective*
**DAY 6: (June 8, block 7 and 8): 9:00-5:00pm**  
**Meaningful Partnerships (continued from Day 5)**  
*Morning session (9:00 am – 12:12 pm)*
2. Taming the beast: Critical interpretations of multi-sector partnerships  
*Guest Speaker: Alison Taylor, BSR – The Market Perspective*  
*Afternoon session (1:00pm – 5:00pm)*
3. Team Project Presentations  
4. Conclusions, insights, and closing activities
Course content and schedule of assignments

I. The what and why of multi-sector partnerships (9 am - 5 pm)

DAY 1 (May 26, block 1/am session; block 2/pm session): 9:00 – 5:00 pm

The content of our conversation

Morning session (9 am – 12:15 noon)

1. Introductions and course overview
   - Who are we? Why are we here? What are our goals and collective agreements?

2. Creating collective impact in a shared-power world: the nature and role of multi-sector partnerships
   - The nature of today’s social problems and social transformation; the shifting context in which MSPs emerge; Responses to social problems (market, government, social sector based approaches) and sector failure; MSP as an alternative and integrative response for social and economic value creation

Afternoon session (1:15 pm – 5:00 pm)

3. Organizing the Student Project requirement
   - Overview of the final assignment; students choose topics and form groups

4. Using social technologies to address wicked problems: bridge building across different perspectives
   - **Guest speaker:** John Heller - Using a systems perspective as entry point to multi-stakeholder initiatives

Required readings for May 26 (2 blocks, about 115 pages altogether)

1. Introductory readings
   - These three short pieces go together as a single reading that offers an overview of what researchers tell us: (7 pages)


- Partnerships as instruments of global governance: views from various international cooperation global stakeholders

2. Creating collective impact in a shared-power world

*(Morning readings)*


3. Using social technologies to address wicked problems: bridge building across different perspectives

(Afternoon readings):

- The Essence of Theory U and Presencing by Professor Otto Scharmer
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lUyGBBcdJY


II. The what and how of multi-sector partnerships: institutional differences and collaboration, parts 1 and 2

DAY 2 (May 28, block 3): 8:30 am – 12:30 pm.

Part 1: Building Blocks

The content of our conversation

1. Collaborating across sectors: motivations, risks, benefits, barriers and roles

   • More about the nature of the partnerships with an emphasis on exploring value generation from the perspective of each sector and the implications for considering motivations, risks, benefits, barriers and roles

Required readings for May 28 (about 53 pages)

1. General readings about the nature of partnerships


1. Governance (with capital G) challenges and the inter-organizational life cycle

- Case analysis: the Hocol case in Colombia
- CPPCs at work: the inter-organizational collaborative life cycle; overview, with emphasis on the first stages.

- Guest Speaker: Surita Sandosham, Synergos The Civil Society Perspective

**Required readings for June 1 (46 pages altogether)**

1. Readings about Governance


2. Readings about the life cycle and collaborative nature of partnerships


**DAY 4 (June 3, block 5): 8:30-12:30 pm**

**Part 2 (Continued from Day 3)**

2. Governance (with small g), accountability and leadership (Multi-sector partnerships at work)

• Case analysis: the PTB case in Barcelona

• Structuring and governing multi-sector partnerships; accountability issues and leadership challenges.

• Guest Speaker: Neil Britto, *The Intersector Project*

**Required readings for June 3 (about 50 pages altogether)**

1. Readings about governance structures and accountability


http://cgobservatory.net/tools.php Retrieved on September 27, 2010. Read the following: pages 5-6 and 24-33 [skip or skim pp. 34-64 (so that you know this is there for later reading)]. (11 pages).


2. Readings about leadership and the spirit of collaboration


### III. The so-what of multi-sector partnerships, parts 1 and 2

**DAY 5 (June 5, block 6): 8:30 am – 12:30 pm.**

**Part 1. Meaningful Partnerships**

**The content of our conversation**

1. Transitions, transformations, exits and lessons: when and how to move on

   - Exploring the importance and strategies for exiting when the project is done

   - **Guest Speaker**: Mark Linton, CS2 – The Government Perspective

**Required readings for June 5 (48 pages)**

1. Transitions, transformations, exits and lessons

note that many are TOOLS to be aware of rather than reading; actual reading text: 17 pages)


2. Readings about defining partnership success and evaluation


DAY 6 (June 8, block 7/am session; block 8/pm session)

Part 2. Applying, sharing and integrating the learning

The content of our conversation

Morning session (9 am – 12:15 noon)

- Guest Speaker: Alison Taylor, BSR – The Market Perspective

1. Taming the beast (Critical interpretations of multi-sector partnerships) - Recognizing power and ideology in the discourse of partnerships
2. Team presentations (fish bowl format, followed by debrief)

Afternoon session (1:15 pm – 5:00 pm)

3. Team presentations continue
4. Conclusions, insights, and closing activities

Required readings for June 8 (53 pages)

You will be working on your papers and preparing for your presentations. Therefore you will read the equivalent of one block (rather than two blocks) for this last day, please see next page. Journals are still required.


–END OF SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS–
Other interesting readings (not required)


Crosby, B. & J. Bryson (2010). Integrative Leadership and the creation and maintenance of cross-sector collaborations. The Leadership Quarterly 21: 211-230. (Skim pp. 211-mid 212; read mid 212-228 with emphasis on sections 1.1 to 1.3 and 2.2 and 2.3) (about 15 pages).


Waddock, Sandra. (2008). Building a New Institutional Infrastructure for Corporate

WaterAid. (2009) Putting our heads together: Debating the potential strengths of partnerships for WASH.