Multi-sector partnerships: A Comparative Perspective

Professor
Sonia Ospina, sonia.ospina@nyu.edu

Office hours - Tuesdays, 3:30-5:30 pm and 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 and clarify the basic components of an effective multi-sector partnership, different possible types of cross-sector collaborations, and the flow of building a multisectoral partnership;
2. Recognize key assumptions, concepts and paradigms from the public, nonprofit and business perspectives, and appreciate the opportunities and barriers these differences create, thus adding new perspectives to their existing worldview;
3. Analyze cases of value creation through multi-sector collaboration in diverse geographical contexts that illustrate the challenges; and apply assumptions, concepts and paradigms to illuminate the case analyzed in their final team project.
4. Identify collaborative leadership competencies (such as the ability to challenge the self, to be critical of all perspectives, to listen to others’ perspectives openly) and potential tools to facilitate partnership work (such as the U-process);
5. Explore their own areas of growth and potential strategies to tackle them to become better bridge-leaders across sectors.
Course Requirements

1. Active engagement in class exercises and discussions around assigned reading - due every session;
2. Individual Journal entries (ref. assigned reading) - due every session starting on Feb 18;
4. Individual final reflection essay – due May 1
5. Final team project presentation (delivered May 6) and paper (due May 11); sub-assignments are detailed in “Instructions for final team project” document and due dates are as follows: one page description of problem and context of the case (due April 1), team work plan (due April 1), draft of collaboration map (due April 26), one-page plan of presentation (due April 26), presentation hand-outs (due May 4).

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 the best possible learning environment. See class participation rubric in NYUClasses.

Attendance and Lateness Policy - Attendance at each class session is expected. If you miss more than one session, 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 more than two sessions is grounds for course failure.

Journaling

• While expected to read all required material, students will choose three readings from each session to comment on their journal.
• Students will link insights from these readings to their own experience and self-assess 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. These assignments are also an opportunity to reflect on the student’s participation in class; including peer interaction, contribution to class and group dynamics.
• 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 upload journals in NYU Classes assignments before arrival to class.
• Format: one paragraph per reading, 1.5 spacing (the journal entries will be no more than one page per session). 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….)

- Students will search and identify (via the internet and their professional networks) a multi-sector partnership and will develop a critical review in the form of a mini-case that describes in some detail its primary components and impact, and identifies factors associated with its success (or shortcomings);
- Student will write a memo (3-5 pages, double space) offering a personal assessment of the case’s robustness as a collaboration case.
- Memo is due on March 25.

Team project

- Students will choose a case in a particular policy area and join a team of participants with similar preference (see list of cases 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.
- Students will present a preliminary version of their work to the class during the last session (May 6). They will hand-in small assignments through out the course, which will build toward the presentation and paper (see assignments in separate document on Team project posted in NYU Classes). Students are responsible for continuing to do the work on their own between sessions to ensure final completion of the project.
- Report is due on May 11.

Cases for the team project:

Case 1: Senegal's Fight against Malnutrition: The Nutrition Enhancement Program (Africa). In:

Case 2: Amangwe Village, South Africa (Africa). In:

Case 3: California's CALFED Water Program (North America). In:

Case 4: MetroGIS (North America). In:
Final reflection essay

- Each student will write a 3-5 page final reflection essay. We will initiate this work during class. Students will then complete the reflective essays, to further incorporate aspects of learning based on the journaling, as well as incorporating readings, class discussions, and guest speakers’ presentations.
- The essay 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 review the “Class participation assessment” document in NYU Classes (in the “team project cases, instructions, writing resources” folder) and use this essay to also reflect on what they learned about themselves and their leadership style through their participation and class contributions.
- Students must 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 essay is due on May 1

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></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- One journaling assignment per session for a total of 6 (no journaling on May 6); posted in NYU Class assignment <strong>before class</strong> (post will close at 8:30 am) except journal for Feb 4 to be posted with journal for Feb 18</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Report (mini-case): Critical review</strong> - Due March 25</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team project (30%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Class presentation – See due dates of small assignments and presentation plan in separate document; presentation delivery due <strong>May 6</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Final team paper – One pager and work plan due <strong>April 1</strong>, final paper due <strong>May 11</strong></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual final reflection essay</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identifying developmental needs and strategy to address them. Due on <strong>May 1</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation – <strong>Assessed every day</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 100%
Overview of Course Contents and assignments

I. The what and why of multi-sector partnerships

Session 1: February 4 – Creating collective impact in a shared-power world: the nature and role of multi-sector partnerships

Session 2: February 18 – Collaborating across sectors: motivations, risks, benefits, barriers and roles
*Journal assignment for Sessions 1 and 2*

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

Session 3: March 4 – Using social technologies to address wicked problems: facilitating bridge building across different perspectives.
*Journal assignment for Session 3*
Guest speaker: Surita Sandosham, Synergos’s approach to building partnerships and The Civil Society Perspective

*Individual Report (mini-case): Critical review: March 25*

*Journal assignment for Session 4; Work plan for teamwork and one page description of the problem and context of the case: April 1*
Guest Speaker: – Jessica Taylor – The Government Perspective

Session 5: April 15 – Architecture and Processes 2: Governance (with small g), accountability and leadership (Multi-sector partnerships at work).
*Journal assignment for Session 5; Attention: Draft of collaboration map and one-page plan of presentation due April 26*
Guest Speaker: Neil Britto, The Intersector Project

III. The so-what of multi-sector partnerships

Session 6: April 29 – Meaningful Partnerships: Transitions, transformations, exits and lessons (evaluation): when and how to move on.
*Journal assignment for Session 6*
Guest Speaker: Sara Enright – The Market Perspective
*Individual final reflection essay: May 1; Attention: presentation hand-out due May 4*

Session 7: May 6 – Taming the beast: Critical interpretations of multi-sector partnerships.
*Wrapping up: lessons and insights of multi-sector partnerships*
*Team Project Presentations: May 6; Team project paper: May 11*
I. The what and why of multi-sector partnerships

Session 1: February 4

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

Required readings


- These three short pieces go together as a single reading (and single journal entry) that offers an overview of what researchers tell us: (7 pages)


- Read the following case (be prepared to describe and discuss):

Session 2: February 18

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

Journal assignment for Sessions 1 and 2 due today

Required readings

- Caplan, K.: 2013. Taking the Mythology out of Partnerships – A view from the ground up (4 pages).
- Re-view (and be prepared to discuss) The Chamba Valley Partnership Project (CVPP), Zambia (see Session 1)
II. The who, what and how of multi-sector partnerships: institutional differences and collaboration

Session 3: March 4

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

Guest speaker: Surita Sandoshan - Synergos’s systemic approach to building partnerships and The Civil Society Perspective

Journal assignment for Session 3 due today

Required readings

• Brown (2015), Bridge-Building for Social Transformation, Stanford Social Innovation Review (18 pages)

• Synergos. (2012). Ten lessons on Multi-stakeholder Partnerships. New York City: Synergos (pp. 3-16) (13 pages)

• Watch: The Essence of Theory U and Presencing, by Professor Otto Scharmer [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lUyGBBcdJY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lUyGBBcdJY) (5:15 minutes)


SPRING BREAK: March 11-19 No classes
ATTENTION: March 25: No Class but Individual Report (mini-case): Critical review due March 25 (uploaded by 6 pm)
Session 4: April 1

Architecture and Processes: 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: Jessica Taylor, Presently Goldman Sacks; formerly NYC Small Business Program - The Government Perspective

Journal assignment for Session 4 due today

Team deliverable: One page description of the problem and context of the case; bullet points about contextual elements that must be considered to propose alternative scenario (bring to class); Team work plan also due.

Required readings


- Application: Praxis. 2016. CRS in India. Read the following: Preface, Chapter 1 (6-19); Chapter 5 (34-37); and Chapter 13 (64-67) (20 pages)


Session 5: April 15

Architecture and Processes 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 – An overview of the ecology of partnerships

Journal assignment for Session 5 due today

Required readings

  - Governance structures and accountability - CHAPTER 3 (pp. 13-15) (3 pages)
  - Leadership - CHAPTER 4 (pp. 17-24) (7 pages).


- Caplan, K.:


Attention: WEDNESDAY APRIL 26 Team deliverable: Draft of the map that describes the overall collaboration; one-page plan of the presentation. Send to Prof. Ospina
III. The so-what of multi-sector partnerships

Session 6: April 29

**Meaningful Partnerships:** Transitions, transformations, exits and lessons: when and how to move on

- Defining success and planning evaluation
- Exploring the importance and strategies for exiting when the project is done; considering both dimensions when starting a new partnership

**Guest Speaker:** Sara Enright, BSR – The Market Perspective

**Journal assignment for Session 6 due today**

**Required readings**


**Attention:** MONDAY May 1: Individual final reflection essay due (Post by 6 pm)
Attention: THURSDAY May 4 Team deliverable: Presentation Hand-outs to be distributed to students: a two-page summary of the case [following Tool 7 in Tennyson (2003) The Partnering Tool Book]. Send to all course participants by e-mail so they can read by Saturday.

Session 7: May 6

Applying, sharing and integrating the learning

1. Taming the beast (Critical interpretations of multi-sector partnerships) - Recognizing power and ideology in the discourse of partnerships

2. Team presentations (fish bowl or other format, followed by debrief Q&A)

3. Wrapping up

Team Project Presentations due today; please read the two-page summaries sent by students on May 4 for three other cases.

Required readings


Team project paper: due May 11

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


Independent Evaluations Group (IEG), World Bank, (2007), Sourcebook for Evaluating Global and Regional Partnership Programs: Indicative Principles and Standards

Progress with Strategic Participatory Communication: A Case Study from Colombia. Anagramas, 6(12): 107-128.


Sandosham, S. & D. Winder. (2008) Building Multi-sector Partnerships to Address Complex Problems: Lessons from the Partnership for Child Nutrition and the Bhavishya Alliance, India. New York City: Synergos. Scan pages 1-5 (you are now familiar with this case) and concentrate on Lessons (pp. 5-13: 8 pages)


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