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79

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PARTNERING FOR IMPACT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



THEMES

- New approaches to development research
- The realities of research partnerships
- Evidence, policy and practice
- Using research networks and alliances
- Does participatory research support sustainable development?



Development
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The Development Bulletin

The Development Bulletin has, for 30 years, been the journal of the Development Studies Network based at the Crawford School of Public Policy, The Australian National University. It is an occasional publication providing at least one issue a year. For 30 years each issue has focused on a specific, topical development theme providing a multi-disciplinary perspective on a range of opinions on development activities, theories, and research. The journal includes commissioned and submitted papers and is available in hard copy or online for free download. Authors include academics, development professionals, those working in non-government and government organisations, consultants, teachers, community leaders, politicians and students of development in the Pacific and Asia. Development Bulletin papers are short and concise with a word limit of 3,500.

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Cover photos

Left: Partnering for literacy, Nepal.
(Photo: United Mission to Nepal, Transform
Aid International)

Right: Health workers collaborating with UNICEF
to development child immunisation messages
Malaita, Solomon Islands. (Photo: Pamela Thomas)

Back: Learning lab on food and nutrition security,
Katmandu, Nepal. (Photo: Robyn Alders)

DEVELOPMENT BULLETIN

Issue 79 January 2018

PARTNERING FOR IMPACT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Innovative research is the focus of this issue. The papers, case studies and reports consider the results of research partnerships between academics, development practitioners, village communities and policy-makers in Australia and our neighbours. Most papers are selected from those presented at the international conference “Partnering for impact on sustainable development”, hosted by The University of Sydney, June 13-14, 2017, under the auspices of the Research for Development Impact (RDI) Network who also provided support for this publication.

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Private sector partnerships for climate change adaptation: Lessons from a Fijian case study

Anna Gero, University of Technology Sydney; Nicola Glendining and Moortaza Jiwani, United Nations Development Programme, Fiji

Private sector involvement in climate change adaptation (CCA) has long been discussed as an important contributor to progress in sustainable development. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) notes the private sector's capacity for innovation, technology development and financial leverage (Pauw et al 2016) while the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) make clear the need for partnership and collaboration with the private sector to help overcome the challenges climate change will bring to development. In the Pacific, there is also a very clear policy directive for private sector engagement in the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) et al 2016) which provides strategic guidance for Pacific stakeholders on ways to enhance resilience for sustainable development.

Much has been written about partnering with the private sector and subsequent potential benefits for CCA which include new job opportunities, economic growth, poverty reduction and contributing to transformational change (Trabacchi and Stadelmann 2013, Pickering et al 2017). However, there is a lack of real-world examples of government, non-government and community partnerships with the private sector, particularly in developing countries (Pauw 2015). This paper helps address this gap by developing a conceptual framework that proposes key factors thought to be important for private sector partnerships for CCA in the Pacific. This framework is then applied to a specific case in the Pacific, the Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council (FBDRRC), and its partnership with the Fijian Government, to test the extent to which the proposed factors contribute to a real world partnership.

Historical and international policy context

The private sector's capacity for innovation, technology development and financial leverage is widely acknowledged (Pauw et al 2016) and private sector engagement has become ubiquitous in discussions around CCA for some time. Private sector engagement in development dialogue had its beginnings in 1992 with the launch of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Since the early 2000's, numerous initiatives bringing private sector voices to development and CCA discussions have occurred such as 'Business and the Millennium Development Goals: A Framework for Action' (UNDP and IBLF 2003); UNDP's 'Growing Inclusive Markets' initiative (UNDP 2008), the Private Sector Initiative in 2011, and the Private Sector Facility established by the Green Climate Fund in 2013 (Fayolle et al 2017).

From a policy perspective, the SDGs also highlight the need for engagement with the private sector for CCA. Goal 13, Climate Action, highlights the need to work with the private sector to identify adaptation opportunities and to leverage private sector expertise (UN 2016). The FRDP similarly includes the private sector as a key stakeholder under several of its goals (PIFS et al 2016).

Globally, partnerships with the private sector are already occurring on CCA issues. However, there remains a lack of guidance of what successful private sector engagement on CCA initiatives looks like in various contexts—including the Pacific. Most examples see the private sector's interests, expertise and resources being merged into the development and CCA-focussed agenda, rather than development practitioners seeking to understand how their agenda aligns with private sector interests. The following conceptual framework and its application to a case study provides insights and practical guidance on how these shortcomings can be overcome.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework proposed for this research draws on literature from the business sector in general, as well as available research from the Pacific. Four key elements (see Figure 1 below) that facilitate effective private sector partnerships for CCA emerge and are described below.

Alignment with local context

For a successful partnership, all partners need to align with the underlying cultural, political, social, economic and geographic contexts in which they are embedded. This is particularly the case when external or ‘outside’ partners enter into a partnership with locally based actors. In the Pacific, the following factors are important when considering partnerships between private sector actors, government and community.

- *Collectivism over individuality*: Collectivism, or prioritising the collective over the individual, is inherent in Pacific culture (Saffu 2003). This practice does not align with the dominant view of how businesses operate (Purcell and Scheyven 2015).
- *Power distance*: In Pacific cultures, power distance (relating to how power is distributed across a culture) means it is acceptable for large and unequal distribution of power to exist in communities and society (Hofstede 1980). Power, hierarchy, and status within a culture impact upon entrepreneurship, and the way businesses function, reflecting the cultural views on traditional hierarchies.
- *Gender*: Traditional gender roles in the Pacific see women typically playing roles in the home and tending to domestic duties. While some examples of successful business-women exist in the Pacific, most entrepreneurs and business owners still tend to be male (ibid).
- *Perceptions of uncertainty*: In the Pacific, ambiguity carries a level of anxiety, and risk taking is something typically to be avoided (ibid). This cultural dimension relates to how new partnerships with private sector actors emerge, particularly in the context of climate change where uncertainty around the future is unknown.
- *Geographic factors*: Smaller economies of scale, remoteness, geographic fragmentation and low density populations make doing business a challenge in Pacific Islands.

High labour, transport and production costs deem some exports uncompetitive and constrain the expansion of markets to international customers.

Good relationships in the Pacific

International business literature notes that for micro- and small to medium enterprises (SMEs), successful business creation and growth is linked to interpersonal networking (Reeg 2013). Past research has shown that informal relationships and trust are significant contributing factors to adaptive capacity in the Pacific (Gero et al 2015). Where institutional capacity is low due to small populations in the Pacific, informal relationships between individuals enhanced the efficiency of information flows (ibid). Research in Samoa, for example, found that personal relationships were critical to how small enterprises operated at the local level (Cahn 2008).

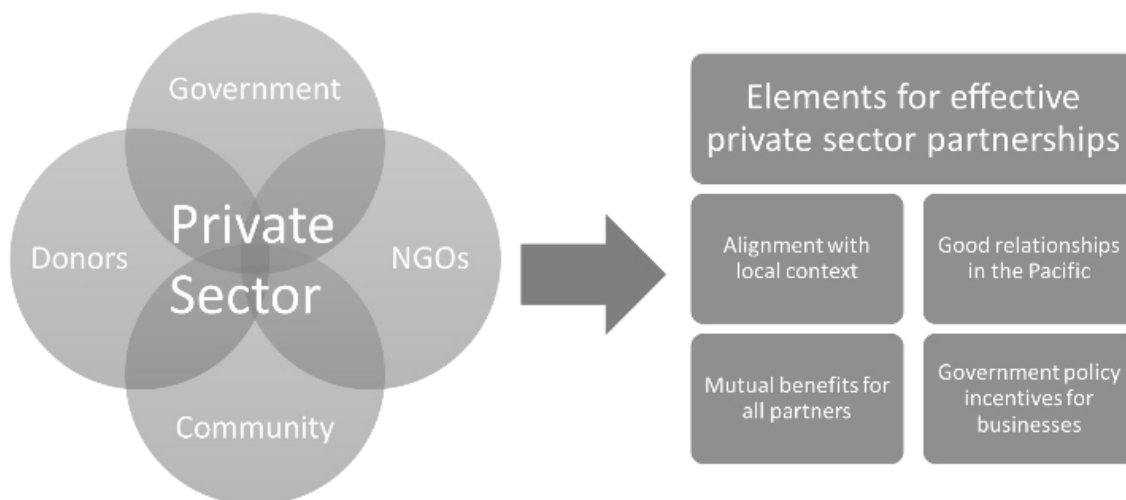
Government policy incentives for businesses

International literature shows that government policy can actively encourage productive entrepreneurship through the development of supportive institutional settings and the reduction of constraints on businesses (Minniti 2008). These helpful government policies include (Minniti 2008, Cho and Honorati 2014, Piza et al 2016):

- policy support;
- financial support;
- capacity building;
- supporting networks;
- value chain support; and
- specific business support.

Government support of business in the Pacific has implications for private sector partnerships. Partnerships require sustainable commitment from all parties, thus private sector actors need stable and supportive institutional environments in which to operate. It is therefore important to understand the policy environment in which businesses operate in order to assess their ability to participate in partnerships for CCA.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for effective private sector partnerships for CCA in the Pacific



Mutual benefits for all partners

For the private sector, benefits of partnerships may include opening up new business opportunities (Christiansen et al 2012). Concurrently, climate change could modify the typical conditions in which Pacific businesses operate, potentially for the worse in some situations—for example, more frequent tropical cyclones causing business interruption, or fewer tourists to previously popular locations due to altered weather patterns. Adaptation is therefore a necessity for business continuity, and partnering with government, NGOs or communities may better enable risk sharing. From the government’s perspective, public-private partnerships can help lessen uncertainties by sharing risks as well as leveraging expertise and resources (World Bank 2016).

These four elements of the conceptual framework (Figure 1) were applied to the case study, as described in the following section.

Case study: Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council

The Fiji Business Disaster Resilience Council (FBDR) is a new example of a private sector partnership for CCA given that the effects of climate change necessitate establishing new ways of business engagement with government and other stakeholders on risk management issues. FBDR has relationships with the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO), communities, NGOs and UN agencies.

The FBDR officially formed in July 2016 as an additional council of the Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF). The two key objectives of the Council are to: strengthen the engagement of the private sector in Fiji with government in terms of resilience, disaster preparedness, response and recovery; and support the private sector in improving its own resilience.

The need for improved coordination with government and the private sector was highlighted during severe tropical cyclone Winston, which struck Fiji in February 2016. The impacts from the cyclone provided the impetus for the private sector to engage in disaster risk management.

An initial planning workshop for FBDR saw participants representing Goodman Fielder, Vodafone Fiji Ltd, Vinod Patel Ltd, Digicel, Westpac Banking Corporation, Bank of South Pacific, Coca Cola Amatil, Fiji Electricity Authority and DHL Express (Fiji) Ltd—come together to discuss coordination. This workshop saw the Council develop their objectives and a clear understanding of support it could provide members.

Both the establishment of the Council, and its ongoing operation, has benefitted greatly from influential ‘champions’ from within the business sector. These champions have been critical in advocating for engagement with Government, in encouraging other businesses to join the Council, and in diffusing lessons learned from the Council to other Pacific Chambers of Commerce at regional and global forums.

Activities of the Council include:

- support to businesses in developing business continuity plans;
- networking with other businesses;
- supporting the government in delivering response, recovery, preparedness and resilience building activities;
- training (for example, on understanding weather patterns, and on disaster preparedness, response and recovery);
- participation in government-led disaster risk management discussions;
- advocacy on behalf of the private sector;
- monthly meetings, with external speakers presenting on relevant topics; and
- informal gatherings to allow for relationship building.

Membership to FBDR is open to all businesses who are members of the Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (a non-profit body). Membership fees for the latter organisation are minimal, especially for SMEs.

Alignment with local context

FBDR and its partnership with government aligned with local context in two principle ways. Firstly, Council members comprised Fijian-based businesses who were also members of the Fijian Commerce and Employers Federation. The Council and government partners were therefore inherently able to incorporate specific cultural and geographical contexts in their partnership approach, given they were based within that same cultural and geographical context. Documentation and descriptions of FBDR highlight how the Council also provides a local information database and monitoring mechanism (Connecting Business Initiative n.d.).

Secondly, FBDR was initiated from within an existing local coordination mechanism (that is, the FCEF). One benefit of this was that the starting point, objectives and activities were led by the private sector. This follows the ‘development first’ approach to managing risks, which recognises the benefits of embedding risk management into pre-existing institutions, rather than creating new mechanisms. FBDR’s emergence from a pre-existing structure is an important point and contributing factor to its success and that of the partnership.

Good relationships in the Pacific

FBDR understood the importance of building good relationships between key individuals within its own network and with government, civil society and international organisations (FBDR 2016a) and built these into its activities, for example, formal meetings with government and informal networking opportunities. The Council also benefited from having strong leadership with key individuals able to influence and inspire others within the private sector to engage in the Council’s activities.

In a FBDR-led ‘Lessons Learned Workshop’ following tropical cyclone Winston, Council members noted the importance of continuous dialogue and partnership with government to enable effective coordination (FBDR 2016b). Acknowledging the importance of these partnerships links to the fifth Risk Governance Building Block for Resilient Development in the Pacific—key components of

the Pacific Risk Resilience Programme (PRRP) that detail how Pacific communities can become more resilient in the face of climate change and natural disasters (UNDP 2016). FBDRC has established relationships with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO, the lead national organisation for disaster risk management), the Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management and other government agencies, which enabled private sector participation in the government led response. This finding aligns with other post-Winston reflections on factors affecting successful disaster response in the Pacific—that coordination and smooth flow of information were enhanced by pre-existing relationships based on mutual trust (PHT 2016).

Government policy incentives and support for business participation

The Government of Fiji's support of private sector engagement is noted in several policy frameworks, highlighting how the government is aiming to overcome the idea that doing business in Fiji is a challenge. For example, the Fiji Green Growth Framework notes that partnerships and strengthened private sector development are key aspects of their approach moving forward, ensuring 'no-one is excluded' (Fiji Government 2014:22). The Fijian Government has also committed to provide an environment conducive to a robust, resilient private sector (Fiji Government 2016). At the Pacific regional level, there are also calls to better enable participation of and partnerships with the private sector (see PIFS et al 2016).

FBDRC is supported by government through several mechanisms, including the provision of information, linkages to specific people in relevant government ministries, formal endorsement of FBDRC initiatives, and participation in government-led discussions (for example, with NDMO). FBDRC has, for example, been offered a place on the Government's Disaster Management Council (FBDRC 2016a). This national body represents the highest level decision makers from government ministries, providing overarching leadership in times of disaster response and recovery. The Council has also been invited to participate in the review of Fiji's draft Humanitarian Policy for Disaster Risk Management (Fiji Government 2016). Such a review enables FBDRC to ensure private sector objectives are represented in national policy.

Mutual benefits for all partners

Successful partnerships are characterised by multi-benefit objectives, where there is an understanding of the commitments and responsibilities of all partners (Sanni 2016). Benefits to members of the Council were clearly articulated and included (FBDRC 2016a, FBDRC 2016b):

- participation in government's disaster management structures;
- access to government's disaster management information (for example, hazard mapping);
- ability to influence government's policies on resilience, disaster preparedness and response;
- support in developing Business Continuity Plans; and
- weather pattern interpretation.

Benefits to government included:

- access to private sector resources and expertise;
- provision of local data on private sector capacity and resources (critical in post-disaster needs assessments); and
- the immediacy of businesses to respond and mobilise resources in post-disaster situations due to their embeddedness in communities.

The effectiveness of the partnership going forward will need to ensure an equal balance of benefits and interests so that both private sector and government partners continue to see value in engaging in the partnership.

Reflections and conclusion

This research has explored an example of a private sector partnership for CCA in Fiji, applying an experimental conceptual framework to test the extent to which key elements identified in the literature were important for a real world partnership case. Application of the framework allowed researchers to understand the factors affecting the success of the FBDRC's partnership with government. Reflections on the applicability of the conceptual framework were provided in order to assist other practitioners in supporting programmes, evaluations and other initiatives that promote private sector partnerships for CCA in the Pacific. The main limitation of this research was the lack of documentation, specifically on the case study, given it has only been formally operating for around one year. This was overcome by sourcing reference material from multiple sources—for example, from UNDP, press articles and media releases.

To summarise, to date FBDRC's partnership with government has been successful for the following reasons.

Firstly, it aligned with the local context, primarily because it was initiated from within a pre-existing Fijian-led business mechanism. This meant that cultural and geographical contextual issues were already embedded within its workings, and perhaps more importantly, that its starting point and objectives were generated by the private sector. The framework initially proposed that acknowledging cultural and geographical context was important for private sector partnerships. This is likely to be more important for partnerships with external (or outside) private sector bodies, which requires further testing and research.

Secondly, good relationships with key stakeholders in the business and government sectors were a crucial element of the partnership's success. The case study highlighted that having such relationships with leaders and individual change agents from the private sector and government was particularly important.

Thirdly, government support was a critical factor in the success of the partnership. Such support was demonstrated in policy considerations and the inclusion of private sector interests in decision making bodies and policies.

Lastly, having clearly defined and understood mutual benefits for private sector and government stakeholders was a key component of the success of the partnership. Both partners had incentives to participate and their engagement

allowed them to gain something in various ways—for example, access to information, upskilling and influence.

The partnership model of FBDRC with government has been widely acknowledged as an effective means of improving private sector engagement and coordination in the Pacific. For example, the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and PIPSO recently launched a similar Council called the ‘Business Resilience Committee,’ and a Pacific Regional Resilience Council is also being planned. The uptake of this model of private sector partnerships elsewhere indicates its value beyond the Fiji experience and how it resonates with both private sector and government stakeholders. As experience grows over time, further lessons and experiences from Fiji, Vanuatu and at the

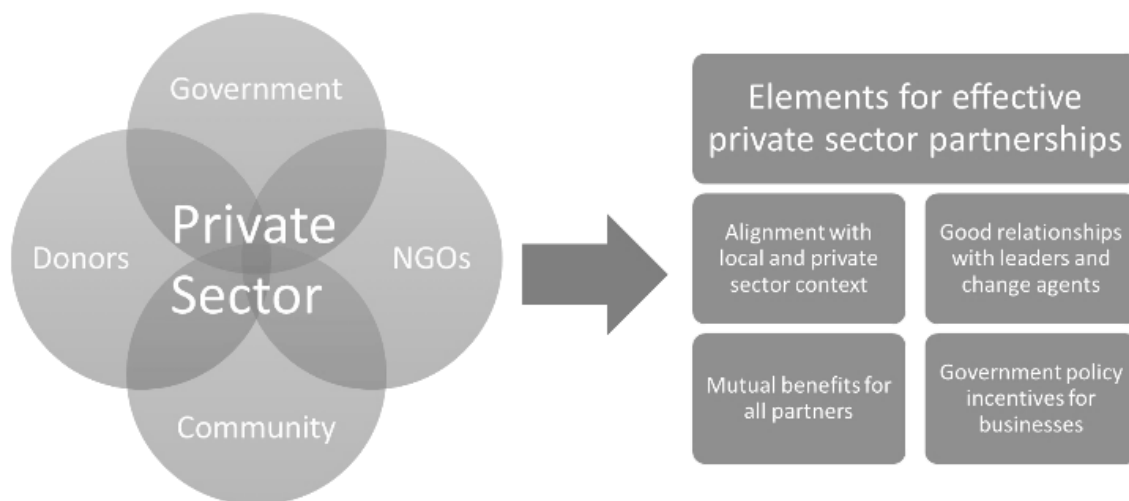
regional level can be shared to enable emerging private sector partnerships to effectively contribute to CCA and sustainable development more broadly.

Given the above findings which highlight the usefulness of the conceptual framework, we therefore propose the following slight alterations to the first two components (see Figure 2 below).

The FBDRC partnership case study has demonstrated the value of the conceptual framework (with the above small changes) for understanding components required for successful private sector engagement on CCA. It therefore provides a useful tool for development partners, NGOs and donors to inform their strategies for engagement with the private sector in the Pacific.

Figure 2: Revised conceptual framework for private sector partnerships in the Pacific

1. Alignment with local and private sector context
2. Good relationships with leaders and change agents



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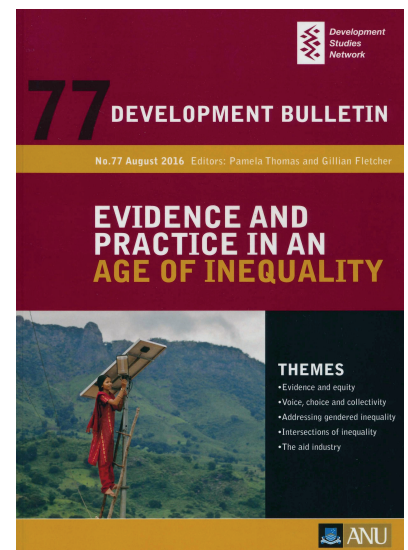
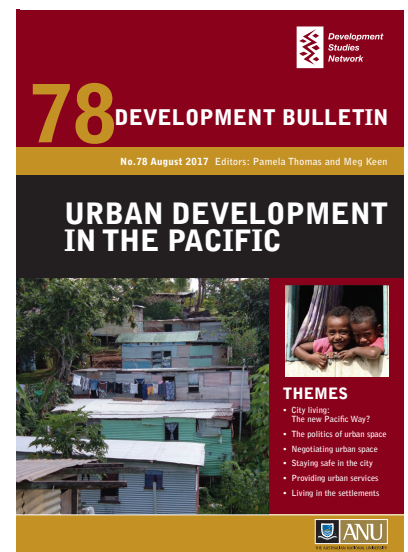
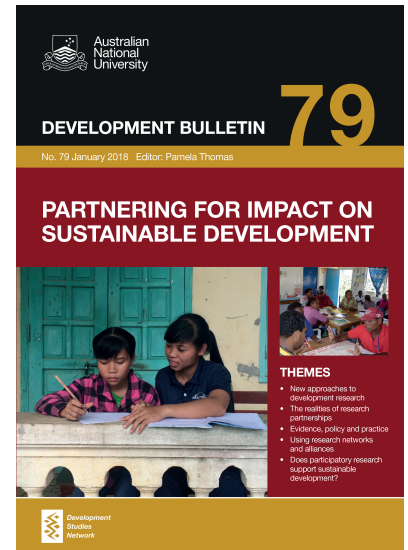
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