

## **Abstract**

Profit and non-for-profit partnerships are strategic cross-sector collaborations providing innovative answers to new global challenges. Knowledge transfer amongst organizations is a critical resource that permits to improve organizational performance. Through the case studies of Coopì-Guna and Gret-Danone, the research aims at exploring the impact of knowledge transfer on the profit and non-for-profit partnerships' performance. The Italian partnership, Coopì-Guna, and the French one, Gret-Danone, have been chosen for their performance and comparability. Three specific issues are studied: a) explore the impact of knowledge transfer on the partnerships, b) compare the French and the Italian case studies, and c) understand the key variables affecting partnerships' success. The literature review analysis has been complemented with face-to-face semi-structured interviews conducted with the nonprofit and profit organizations mentioned. The results of the case studies confirm that knowledge transfer has been a decisive and pervasive element for the partnerships' management and performance. The comparison of the case studies shows that the main difference between the Italian and the French partnerships has been the knowledge transfer mechanism they have used, one informal and the other formal. It suggests that there is not an optimal knowledge transfer mechanism, but the crucial issue is the fit and compatibility amongst the partners. Mutual trust and cultural alignments towards the project have been identified as the key variables for a better partnerships' success.

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# 1. Introduction

Global issues have become more complex to address, transcending sectorial frontiers and diminishing government ability to resolve social concerns (*Bryson et al. 2006*). Cross-sector partnerships are nowadays considering strategic alternatives to address the main society's public challenges (*Selsky, Parker, 2005; Jupp, 2000; Wagner, 2011*).

While the divergences in population's social needs are intensifying, the nonprofit sector is growing and nonprofit organizations have become the best government's alternative mechanism for providing collective services (*Weisbrod, 2011*). The OECD, Organization for Economic co-operation and development, recognized the worldwide nonprofit sector as an economic force considerably strong. Together with the increase of the social demand, the insufficiency of resources to provide an answer to them is rising. Partnerships in the profit world have firstly been a steadily risen solution to overpass the scarcity of revenue and are currently a real fruitful evolution (*Wesbrod, 2011*). Simultaneously, the growing international competition and pressures for more social responsibility have naturally drawn the attention of the profit sector toward the nonprofit ones. These cross-sectorial partnerships have continued their ascension over the time, up to become vehicles for diversification and strategic instruments for business responsibility (*Laasonen et al. 2011*). Although the sectors' relationships have been historically and traditionally associated to divergences and conflicts, the mutual perception has changed over the years. Nowadays interests are converging and benefits obtained through these strategic collaborations are increasing (*ORSE, Le Rameau, 2012*).

Having followed different paths, the two sectors have developed different skills and knowledge, that are after all, at the origin of the complementarity bringing them closer

together and enabling them to design new efficient solutions to face the modern challenges (*Coordination Sud et Medef 2010*).

In recent years, the efficient use and exchange of knowledge have been a source of competitive advantage associated to organizational performance (*Grant 1996 ; Mowery et al. 1996; Zaheer 1998; Cumming, 2003; Levin 2004 ; Becker 2006 ; Mitton 2007 ; Van Wijk et al. 2008*). The acquisition of new skills and capabilities from the partner is one of the principal motivations driving the inter-sectorial collaborations. Inter-sectorial collaborations are considered an important driver for learning, an alternative to internal knowledge generation within organizations, and therefore one of the most suitable forms for sharing knowledge (*Becerra et al 2008*). Strategic collaborations have never ceased to rise and scholars have intensified their attention on inter-firm collaboration and the acquirement of new resources and capabilities (*Panjaitan, Noorderhaven, 2008*). Thus, the growing interest with respect to cross-sectorial collaborations ,especially nonprofit and profit partnerships, as a way to address the societal issues' needs, in parallel with the inter-sectorial knowledge exchange and organization performances relation, have been at the origin of the research interest.

Thus, the objective of the thesis is to explore the impact of knowledge transfer on the profit-nonprofit partnerships' performance. Accordingly, the principal research questions are the following:

- RQ1. How does knowledge transfer impact on nonprofit-profit partnerships?
- RQ2. Are there any differences related to the French and Italian partnerships?
- RQ3. Which knowledge transfer variables have a major impact on the partnerships' success?

In order to answer these questions, the methodology includes the development of two case studies, one in Italy and one in France, with the view to compare them. To realize the case studies, four face-to-face semi structured interviews have been conducted to the respective two nonprofit and profit organizations, in France and in Italy. France and Italy have been chosen both for their similar historic evolution and for their differences in partnership's context that permit their comparison.



The structure of the research is the following.

The chapter one introduces the research strategy and methodology adopted to develop the research. This chapter presents the justification for a qualitative methodology, the instrument chosen with consideration to the research questions, and the criteria developed to select the case studies.

The chapters two, three and four constitute the literature review. The chapter two presents the rise of cross-sector partnerships, with a focus on the nonprofit-profit ones, and the description of the partnerships' situation in France and Italy.

The chapter three deals with all the components of the nonprofit-profit partnerships, going from the motivational forces, to the factors of success, including the mutual benefits, the current risks and the principal barriers.

The chapter four emphasizes the relevance of the knowledge transfer, deepening the inter-organizational knowledge transfer variables, and concluding with its correlation to organizational performance.

The chapter five gives a presentation of the two partnerships chosen for the case studies and exhibits the main findings of the interviews. The first part presents the two businesses, the two nonprofit organizations and the two projects achieved. The second part displays the findings of the four interviews conducted according to the main issues tackled.

The chapter six analyses the two case studies and provides interpretations and hypothesis of the results. The chapter is structured in three parts covering the three research questions.

The last chapter of the study highlights the main conclusions and identifies the limitation of the results. The chapter closes by suggesting areas for further exploration and analysis.

## **2. Research strategy and methodology**

### **2.1 A qualitative methodology for a case study approach**

#### ***2.1.1 Objectives and research questions***

There are two principal ideas highlighted in the literature review. The first one concerns the growing number of cross-sector partnerships, especially nonprofit and profits ones, appearing to be an efficient way to address social issues (*Selsky, Parker, 2005; Jupp, 2000; Wagner, 2011*). The second concept is the issue of knowledge transfer as a source of competitive advantage associated to organizational performance (*Grant 199; Mowery et al. 1996; Zaheer 1998; Cumming, 2003; Levin 2004; Becker 2006; Mitton 2007; Van Wijk et al. 2008*).

The hypothesis resulting from the literature review is the following. If knowledge transfer affects organizational performance, knowledge transfer can affect the profit-nonprofit partnerships' success. Thus, the objective of the thesis is to explore the mechanisms of knowledge transfer within cross-sector partnerships and its relation to projects performance.

The associated research questions are the following:

RQ1. How does knowledge transfer impact on nonprofit-profit partnerships?

RQ2. Are there any differences related to the French and Italian partnerships?

RQ3. Which knowledge transfer variables have a major impact on the partnerships' success?

### ***2.1.2 Elaboration of case studies***

The research questions link theoretical and practical fields by exploring the mechanisms of knowledge transfer within genuine cross-sector partnerships. Given the complexity of the knowledge perception, its social nature and its measurement, a qualitative approach helps capturing real human impressions (*Denzin et al, 2000*). Perkmann (2002) recommends using a case study approach to measure the impact of knowledge transfer. Furthermore, case study method is a particularly appropriate vehicle to understand complex social phenomena because it allows the investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (*Yin, Robert, 2000*).

In order to comply with the third research question, two case studies are select, one in Italy and one in France. The criteria adopted to select these two countries focuses on their both similarities and differences. Their similarities in term of historical evolutions and national characteristics, such as law, religion, geographic situation, or the power granted to private institutions in both countries, allow comparing them. Their differences regarding their respective cross-sector partnerships evolution and situation, permit however to discuss knowledge transfer divergences.

### ***2.1.3 Data collection tool: semi-structured face-to-face interviews***

The principal data-gathering tool is a semi-structured face-to-face interview. Face-to-face interviews area suitable instrument where there is the need to deepen a concept and where the research is primarily focused on gaining insights and understandings on the current situations and dynamics (*Ritchie, Lewis 2003; Marshall, Rossman, 1995*). Thus, the collection of qualitative data in which the respondent

personally expresses its point of views on particular subjects, is considered an adequate instrument for the purpose of the study (*Gillham 2000, Ritchie, Lewis 2003*).

Interviews are semi-structured due to the need the to have a common framework that enable the cases comparison, but also to ensure flexibility on how particular areas might be followed up and developed with different interviewees (*Lewis et al, 2004*).

Finally, the interlocutors are select according to two criteria: their knowledge of the overall project analyzed, and their involvement with the organization partners.

Thus, the semi-structured interviews provide a unique opportunity to uncover rich and complex information about an individual. On the other hand, the weakness lies in the difficulty to generalize the results obtained because the findings are valid just for the case studies analyzed. Additionally, the criticism face he limitations associated with the case study approach: subjectivity lacks of statistical validity and lack of bias (*Cavana et al 2001*).

## **2.2 Presentation of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire has been developed according to the existing theory and the research questions, in such a way to understand how knowledge transfer impacts on nonprofit-profit partnerships. To achieve it, a series of variables are select and include within the questionnaire. These variables characterize the knowledge transfer and its impact on performance. The surveys questions also include provision for open-ended responses in order to generate possible other determinant variables to partnerships' success.

The questionnaire<sup>1</sup> is build up of three main subject parts respectively divided into sub-themes.

The first part, named '*basic information*', regards elementary details concerning the

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<sup>1</sup> The questionnaires can be find within the annexes translate in three languages : English, Italian and French.

people interviewed, the outline of the project, and the partnership formation. Within the questionnaire, the sub-themes are respectively named '*introductive question*', '*partnership profile*' and '*partnership creation*'. They aim at introducing the interlocutor and its role within the partnership, and understand the main motivational factors that have pushed the two actors to collaborate.

The second part, named '*variables of inter-knowledge transfer and their impacts on the project outcome*', is the most decisive phase of the interview. It is composed by six sub themes: '*knowledge transfer mechanisms: formal/informal*', '*mutual trust*', '*cultural alignment*', '*organizational fit*', '*complementarity of resources*', and '*usefulness of knowledge*'. The literature review highlights the two first variables as being directly associated to knowledge transfer, and the following ones as indirect variables<sup>2</sup>.

The third part, named '*the key variable(s) for success*', is divided into two sub-themes called '*most important variables for collaboration success*' and '*conclusive question*'. The first sub-themes aim at summarizing and categorizing the key variables that have led the partnership to success. Through this approach, it would be possible to comprehend the impact of the knowledge transfer variables on the success of the partnership. The second sub-theme is an open conclusive question that allows the interlocutor to give its opinion regarding the future of these partnerships in such a way to fuel the views on this issue.

### ***2.2.1 knowledge transfer variables and their impacts on the partnership success***

The variables composing the second part of the questionnaire arise from the literature review. They are technical and gather different elements of inter-organizational knowledge transfer. Consequently, to understand the further case studies

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<sup>2</sup> The review of literature highlights others variables having influence on the knowledge transfer success that are not taken in account in the questionnaire, or partially taken in account because of their secondary impact or their impossibility to be qualitatively measured. For instance the level of absorptive capacity or complexity of the knowledge are elements not appropriate for the case study proposed, as well as the respondent involved, and are additionally difficult to be measured qualitatively.

the following part provides a short overview of the signification and the literature views of each variable, and the associated questions of the questionnaire.

### *Knowledge transfer mechanisms: formal and informal*

The literature review on knowledge transfer divides in two parts the mechanisms of knowledge transfer, formal and informal, represented the learning context in which the knowledge transfer takes place.

Formal learning regards organized and structured learning context in which learning is intentional, such as face-to-face exchange, networks and communities of practice, regular meeting, document exchanges, site visits or joint project teams (*Cummings et al, 2003 ; Milton and al, 2007*).

Literature on informal knowledge transfer is limited. It appears in a non-structured context in which the learning approach is not intentional (*Eraut, 2000*), for instance occasional personal exchange between the members of the project, informal meetings/phone calls among members of the project, and mail exchange among the members of the projects.

To understand the mechanisms of knowledge transfer within the partnerships, the questions asked are the following:

1. What were the principal tools used to communicate and plan? And the frequency of communication?
2. Would you qualify the partnership's relation formal or informal?
  - Evolution from one mechanism to the other: do you think this evolution brought more success?
  - No evolution: do you think a formal/informal relationship could influence the good partnership management?

The literature on knowledge transfer reveals important findings. Formal mechanisms result to be better acquired by the recipient and are generally associated to the transfer success (*Szulanski, 1996; Evans, 1998; McEvily, 2003 ; Wen ,Yu, 2007*). However, informal learning is a better mechanism in order to alleviate cultural differences and manage distant locations (*Easterby-Smith et al, 2008*).

### *Mutual trust*

Mutual trust between the partners is a dominant issue of the literature concerning knowledge transfer success (*Becerra et al. 2008; Levin, Cross 2004; Zaheer et al. 2013*). Trust is a perception of trustworthiness among individuals or organizations (*Becerra et al, 2008; Zaheer et al, 2013*).

Indicators of trust are for instance mutually developed collaboration procedures, information-sharing processes, complementary expertise or mutual understandings, (*Rondinelli, London, 2003; Levin, Cross, 2004*).

To understand the role of trust within the partnerships the question asked are the following:

1. On which bases could you qualify a partner trustful?
2. Did you perceive an evolution of the level of trust along the relation?
3. According to your opinion, has trust (or the lack of it) between partners, facilitated (impeded) the outcome of the project?
4. What are according to your experience the best ways to establish trust?

The questionnaire deals with different issues on trust. It is interesting to understand if trust is a pre-condition when choosing the partner and/or develops through the relation and according to which factors, and finally its influence on the projects.

### *Cultural alignment*

Knowledge transfer literature expresses the idea that cultural alignment between two organizations in terms of visions, values, behaviors, habits and communications are

factors facilitating knowledge transfer (*Cumming, Teng, 2003 Dahan et al, 2009*). Benefiting from a partner is to be able to adapt to each other, in terms of routines, values, objectives, in order to manage the collaboration (*Despres, Chauvel, 2002*). Cultural alignment positively affects social ties and trust, being two important variables for knowledge transfer (*Nieminen, 2005*). The stronger social ties between individuals are, the better the knowledge sharing and the trust development (*Cumming, Teng, 2003*). Having organizational culture similarities is consequently a facilitating variable for good knowledge transfer (*Nieminen, 2005*). While different cultural backgrounds of the knowledge senders and knowledge receivers can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings (*Weissenberger-Eibl, Spieth, 2006, Smith et al, 2008*).

To understand the importance of cultural alignment within the partnership, the questions asked are the following:

1. Which factors do you consider relevant when choosing your partner?
  - Do you think the choice of the right partner has an impact on the success of the partnership?
2. Do you think that cultural alignment between the two organizations is important?

### *Organizational fit*

Organizational fit is the compatibility in the ‘management’ styles of the two institutions. For instance, a good distribution of power, a formal structure, clear rules and programs, transparency in the decision mechanisms, and human interactions are elements positively influencing knowledge transfer (*Easterby-Smith et al 2008; Wen ,Yu, 2007; Heiman et al, 2006 ; Al-Alawi et al, 2007*).

The objective is to understand if the organizations styles fit together and the importance it makes on the partnership.



To understand the importance of organizational fit within the partnerships, the questions asked are the following:

1. Does the organization of the partnership has fit to challenge cultural differences?
2. Did the partnership organization impact on design, power repartition, and harmony in the top management team's decision making processes?

A good organizational fit balances cultural differences so the first should allow understanding its weight. In addition, the formal design of the structure is positively associated with knowledge transfer (*Easterby-Smith et al 2008; Wen, Yu, 2007; Heiman et al, 2006; Al-Alawi et al, 2007*).

#### *Complementarity of resources*

Complementarity of resources measures the extent to which the other partner compensates one partner's lack of resources. By resources it is intended every kind of resources, tangible and intangible. For instance: financial, management skills, network, human resources, knowledge, production, training workers, production know-how, consultancy, contribution to R&D or marketing/sales contribution and so on (*Heiman et al, 2006 ; Knudsen, 2013*).

Complementarity of resources generally influences trust. Trust in skills, passing through good advices, complementary expertise and mutual understandings improve the bond between individuals, and are an important variable that impact on the knowledge transfer performance (*Levin, Cross, 2004*).

To understand the importance of resource complementarity within the partnerships, the questions asked are the following:

1. What were the specific resources bring by the partners for the project?
2. Were resources complementary?
3. Do you think that there is a correlation between complementarity of the partner's resources and the project management?

There is a natural correlation between cultural alignment, organizational fit and resources complementarity and their impact on knowledge transfer. For instance, findings show that resource complementarity between partners and cultural alignment tolerates poor fit (*Heiman et al, 2006*). Thus, it is interesting to analyze the relationship between them.

#### *Usefulness of knowledge (benefits)*

The term '*useful knowledge*' denotes the perceived receipt knowledge that has a beneficial impact on a partner (*Levin, Cross 2004*). If the knowledge transfer has been successful, it should have brought reciprocal benefits. Some examples of benefits are a better use of resources, a gain of resources, more professional expertise, improvement of the quality of the project, promotion of shared goals, a stronger sense of community, developed new social projects, improvement of organizational knowledge/skills, response to stakeholders' pressures or a gain of legitimacy (*Gazley, 2010 ; Selsky, Parker, 2005*).

To understand the knowledge acquired and the mutual benefits for the partners and the success of the partnership the question asked is the following:

1. Could you tell me, according to your opinion, what are the main benefits your organization reached and the ones of the partner? And for this specific project?

If the knowledge transfer has brought benefits, there is a direct relation between the knowledge transfer variables and the outcome. Moreover, the usefulness of knowledge should confirm the weight of the overall knowledge transfer variables. Indeed, literature identifies that strong tie and strong trust are correlated with the usefulness of knowledge so the statement can be verified through the questionnaire.

## **2.3 Methodology adopted for the partnerships' selection**

In order to select the two cases, eight criteria have been selected.

Firstly, the objective of the research is to study the impact of knowledge transfer on the success of the partnership. Thus, two strategic partnerships are selected, and four criteria developed to comply with this objective.

Secondly, the methodology has previously explained that the Italian and French case studies are put in parallel. The goal is to understand if there are differences in the findings related to the partnerships context. Thus, to realize this objective, two case studies have been selected based on four criteria allowing the comparison.

### ***2.3.1 Elaboration of criteria to guarantee the success of the partnerships***

The criteria are defined on the necessity to guarantee the success of the collaboration. To ensure the mutual involvement of the partners, the four criteria selected are the typology of partnership, the strategic importance of the project for the partners, the partner's core businesses linked to the purpose of the project and the length of the project.

#### *The partnership's typology*

Through the literature review it has been accentuated that cross sector partnerships were not just philanthropic collaboration anymore but were the results of mutual sectorial needs. As a result, successful partnerships do not just consider the economic support from the business to the nonprofit project as essential. Some relationship's typologies have consequently been excluded due to their simple 'charity' relationship, such as cause related marketing, economic donation and good and services donation. It is not excluded that within the relationships chosen for the cases studied these characteristics appear. For example, an economic support from the business is not a matter excluding the selection, but it has to be a part of the relationship and not the whole.

Thus the partnerships' typology selected for the case study are collaborations including skill sharing among the partners, technical support to a product or services, common project created on the field, and employees involvement within the project.

#### *The project's strategic importance for the partners*

A mutual successful collaboration should be beneficial for the two parties. Indeed, a real involvement should be accompanied by a real interest. The review of literature sustains the idea of sectorial complementarity to achieve common objectives. Thus, the case studies should represent this aspect. Thus, the project itself should be significant and have a strategic impact on the business of the two partners, such as the access to new markets, new knowledge, increase in demand, or a better efficiency of the project.

#### *The partners' core businesses linked to the purpose of the project*

This criterion is linked to the precedent ones. To ensure that the project has a strategic impact on the business it is preferable that the two partners core businesses are linked to the project. This criterion mostly concerns the company. The NGO's nature is social so its core business is usually linked to the projects undertook.

On the contrary, the company does not have as primer goal the social aims and it often comes as a supplement to the project.

This criterion should increase the strategic impact of the project and confirm the real involvement of the company in the project. The partners should mutually choose themselves because of their skills and specialties. It is an important condition for a mutual successful and complementary collaboration.

### *The length of the project*

Finally, the last criterion to guarantee the collaboration's success and the project's efficacy is the length of the project. To be relevant for the partners and have a strategic impact, the involvement of the partners within the project should be significant. This condition leads to the selection of sufficiently mature partnerships in which the structures are already set up, in order to permit to study deep organizational dynamics and their evolutions throughout the relationship.

After having studied the general length of the projects and the partners, the criterion of selection concerns partnerships in which the two partners have collaborated at least one year and their project has yet reached a sufficiently mature process or is yet finished and considered a success.

### ***2.3.2 Elaboration of criteria to guarantee the comparison analysis***

The criteria are defined on the necessity to guarantee the comparison of the two case studies. The four criteria selected are similarities in terms of size and activities of the nonprofit organization, identical nationality for the two partners, similarities in terms of the project field, and similarities in terms of the number of partners involved in the project. Evidently, these criteria are the sine qua non to select two similar cases but the more the cases are analogous the more the comparison will be relevant.

#### *Similarities in terms of size and activities of the nonprofit organization*

It is nearly impossible to find projects done by two nonprofit and two organizations of the same size and having the same activities. Previously it has been explained that the principal criterion to guarantee the success of a partnership was that

the companies' core businesses were linked to the project. This consideration remains predominant over their similarities in terms of size and activities.

However, this criterion is essential for the NGO's selection because these entities are usually at the origin of the project development.

Hence, the cases selected are characterized by two nonprofit organizations having a similar activity and a similar size, measured through their budget.

#### *Identic nationality for the two partners*

The French project should be executed by a French NGO and a French company, as well as for the Italian project members. This criterion has two reasons. The first one is that there are elements to study related to communicational, behavioral and cultural elements. It is important that the results express inter-sectorial differences and not cultural organizational ones (in the sense of nationality). Similarly, if there are national differences between the two cases they should stick to France and Italy characteristics. Therefore, it is important that the two partners are from the same country, speak the same language and share the same culture.

#### *Similarities in terms of project's field*

If the projects chosen are completely different, it will be difficult to make parallelism. We do not even want equal projects because it could influence the interpretation maybe due to the field practices or habits.

Thus, although it is preferable that the projects and its objectives vary, it should be preferable that the partnerships concur in the same area of intervention such as health, childcare or energy.

*Similarities in terms of partners' number involve in the project*

Finally, practical cases show that a quite significant number of projects usually involved various supplement actors such as local businesses, universities, NGOs, partners or institutions. Because we are dealing with strategic and lengthy projects, the network of the actors should be relevant.

It is important that the numbers of the actors involved within the project study are sufficiently similar. In this way, the weight of the company and the NGO should be more equals.

To sum up the methodological part, a qualitative approach has been adopted, through the construction of two case studies. This strategy appears to be appropriate for exploring knowledge transfer issue, being complex to quantify, and for understanding human and organizational interactions. The principal data-gathering tool is a semi-structured face-to-face interview.

The questionnaire is elaborated according to a theory-building base that aims at observing the correlation between knowledge transfer variables and collaboration success. The objective is to understand if the variables associated to a good knowledge transfer, can also be associated to the success of collaboration.

Afterwards, a series of variables that stand have been developed to stand for selecting-criteria of the two partnerships for the case study. The variables help to reduce the alternatives and orientate the selection toward strategic partnership able to be compared.

### **3. Partnerships between for-profit and non-for-profit organizations: cross-sector partnerships addressing social issues**

#### **3.1 Cross-sector partnerships: focus on the partnership between profit and non-for-profit organizations**

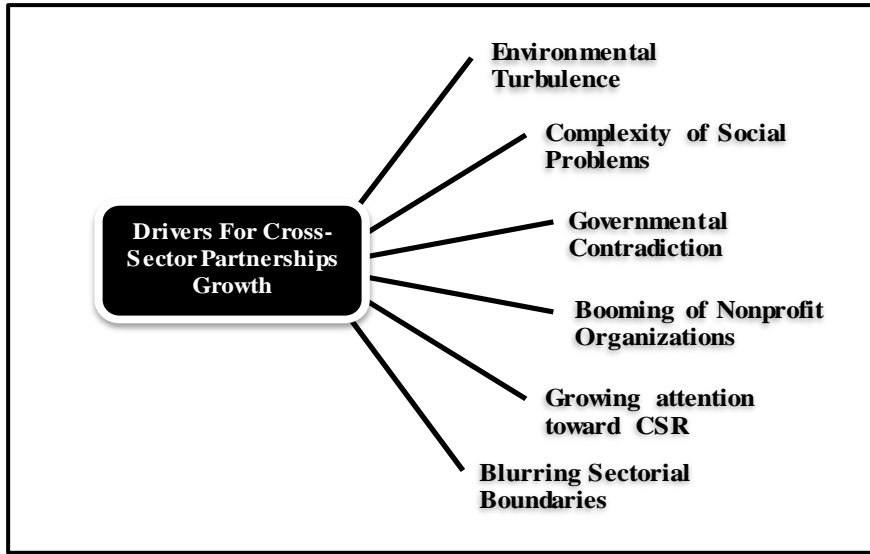
##### ***3.1.1 The rise of cross-sector partnerships***

According to Selsky and Parker (2005), partnerships are increasing over the years in developed and developing countries. Today cross-sector partnerships are considered essential to address the main society's public challenges (*Bryson et al. 2006*). For instance, even if the state intervention has always been one of the main instruments to answer society needs, issues have become more complex and governments cannot always find solutions on their own (*Jupp, 2000*).

There are six principal drivers explaining the cross-sector partnerships proliferation addressing social changes: the uncertainty related to environmental turbulence, the rising complexity of social issues, the important growth in the number and activities of nonprofit organizations, the ascendancy of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the budding trend toward government contradiction and finally the hazing boundaries between sectors (*Wagner, 2011*).



Figure 1. Drivers explaining the rise of cross-sector partnerships



Source: Wagner, 2011

Environmental conditions are a determinant of inter-organizational relationships. For instance, the recent crisis is a worldwide environmental shock increasing uncertainty and decreasing stability, which had progressively intensified the complexity of the relationships and the competition between the main economic actors. Rise in competition and institutional environment forces, such as the promotion of laws in favor of cooperation, are two environmental elements that have stimulated the formation of partnerships and the rapprochement among sectors (*Bryson et al. 2006*).

Then, finding solutions to answer social issues has become harder for two main reasons. On the one hand, society's needs are growing and on the other hand because we are living in an interconnected world in which global social issues involve actors from all around the world. Common public goods concerns such as healthcare, clean water, environmental protection, economic development, education, poverty alleviation, community capacity, or environmental sustainability are examples of social problems transcending the boundaries of any single sector (*Selsky, Parker, 2005*).

The third driver expresses the government's paradox, where governments downplay across the globe while we observe intensification in societies needs (*Crane, 2010*). The governmental contradiction phenomenon is partially explained by the idea that social

needs exceeded the capabilities of the latter to answer them and cross-sector partnerships represent new forms of societal governance balancing the lack of governmental actions (*Wagner, 2011*).

Furthermore, the growth in terms of size, scope, capacity and number of the nonprofit sector is another consequence to the government's incapability to answer all public challenges. Collaboration between governments and nonprofit organizations is starting to be generalized while the hostility from nonprofit toward the for-profit sector has diminished, fostering collaborative possibilities (*Wagner, 2011*).

The awareness toward corporate social responsibility, concerning the proper role and responsibilities of corporations and its strategic impact, is another illustration of the growing concern to social issues. Today CSR constitutes a real driving force encouraging collaborations amongst sectors (*Wagner, 2011*).

Finally, interconnections amongst sectors are intensified by their blurring boundaries. Activities, purposes, values and activities are transcending frontiers, strengthening convergence among sectors (*Wagner, 2011*). This concept is also described as 'single sector failure' to solve public problems, resulting in the formation of partnerships gathering different strengths of the for-profit, public, and nonprofit sectors to contribute to the creation of public value (*Bryson et al. 2006*).

These drivers explain how organizations from different sectors have been attracted and pushed to collaborate, especially concerning public and social services delivery. To summarize, the increase in competition and the complexity of global problems transcending sectorial frontier, have diminished the possibility of governments to resolve social concerns, resulting in the growth of the nonprofit sector and the attention toward CSR, provoking a natural interconnection amongst sectors (*Bryson et al. 2006*).

In front of the large variety of definitions, partnership is defined as "any inter-organizational collaboration where the constituent players (known as 'partners') think of it as such" (*Tennyson, 2003*). Since cross-sector interactions involve the main societal actors that are Business, Government and Civil Society, cross-sector partnerships, or CSSPs, are defined as "cross-sector projects formed explicitly to address social issues and causes that actively engage the partners on an oNGOing basis" (*Selsky, Parker, 2005*).

### ***3.1.2 The relevance to focus on profit and non-for-profit partnerships***

The nonprofit sector has been constantly growing in terms of size and activities over the years (*Weisbrod, 2011*). Until the beginning of the eighties European countries have shown few attention toward these institutions, just having impacts on public awareness. From that period, the nonprofit sector has been recognized as a real actor contributing to social cohesion, provoking the regular consideration from researchers, European commission and national governments (*Anheier et al. 2003*). The increase in social needs, the rise of social protectionism especially in Europe, the constant innovations to ensure social issues, are the main reasons for the growing interests toward these actors (*Anheier et al. 2003*). According to a study done by the OECD (2003), Organization for Economic co-operation and development, the third sector represented all over the world an economic force considerably strong employing almost forty millions of people in the thirty five countries examined equal to 3.6 percent of the working age population.

The sector's expansion has been superior in countries where the population's social needs highly diverge and nonprofit organizations have become the best government's alternative mechanism for providing collective services (*Weisbrod, 2011*).

For instance, in the United States, from the period of recession, between 2007 and 2010, business unemployment and wages have drastically decreased by 8.4 and 8 percent, while for the nonprofit sector it has respectively increased by 4 and 6.5 (*Combi, 2012*)<sup>3</sup>. According to Almalac (2012)<sup>4</sup>, nonprofits have been a major employer from 2009 accounting for the 9 percent of the economy's wages, and over 10 percent of jobs.

This trend has also been observed amongst some European countries, with an entire sector taking a leap forward by offering a wide range of jobs (*CIRIEC,2000*). The economic weight of the nonprofit sector within the European Union is increasing over the years and should continue over time in front of the growing needs (*Anheier et al. 2003*).

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<sup>3</sup> Web site of Urban Institute: <http://www.urban.org/publications/901542.html>

<sup>4</sup> Web site of Urban Institute: <http://www.urban.org/nonprofits/more.cfm>

Together with the increase of the social demand, the insufficiency of resources to answer them is rising. New sources of revenue and relationships with the economy have been built over time to overpass the scarcity of revenue, in which ‘commercial’ relations have been a fruitful evolution (*Wesbrod, 2011*).

Forces driving changes amongst the business sector have also drastically evolved these years. New information and communication technologies have reinforced international economic competition, accelerating globalization and regionalization. Because business success depends on doing things better, faster but also differently, these forces have produced a highly competitive environment based on acceleration, accumulation, equity-driven performance culture, with several implications for government, nonprofits, and communities (*Fosler, 2001*).

Simultaneously, the pressures for more social responsibility are becoming stronger and society is claiming higher transparency on CSR topics (*Laasonen et al. 2011*). This factor has enhanced collaboration. In fact, nonprofit partnerships are a prominent element of corporate social responsibility (*Crane, 2009*). According to the ISO 26000, published the first of November 2010, CSR cover organizational governance, fair operating practices, human rights, labor practices, consumer issues, community involvements/society development and environment, which represent domains of expertise of the nonprofit sector (*Frost, 2007*)<sup>5</sup>.

Nowadays although partnerships between business and nonprofit are quite spread but, collaborations between these two sectors have been conflicted and researches demonstrates the evident difficulty to enter in agreement. Until the nineties, relations were particularly hostile especially through aggressive public denunciation campaigns, accusing companies of destroying environment or having bad labor practices in developing countries. In Europe, both entities have traditionally represented two separated worlds for many reasons such as the culture, the level of regulation or the core business.

Competition in terms of social services and activities has gradually increased and domains tend to converge and mix each other’s. Public recognition of the partnership

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<sup>5</sup> Web site : [http://www.iso.org/iso/home/news\\_index/news\\_archive/news.htm?refid=Ref1049](http://www.iso.org/iso/home/news_index/news_archive/news.htm?refid=Ref1049)

between private companies and nonprofits has slowed down the aggressive competition installed and both entities started to view benefits from collaboration and the possibility of entering new markets (*Wesbrod, 2011*). The thrust for competition has led to the increase of cooperation.

Associations started to find a real interest in playing a strategic role in terms of corporate social responsibility strategy, and companies could no longer deny anymore the arguments of the nonprofit sectors and their social acquaintance. The trend has led to the introduction of a new kind of relation between the two entities, known as partnership (*ORSE, Le Rameau, 2012*).

### ***3.1.3 Outline of the non-for-profit sector***

There is actually not a universal definition for the nonprofit sector. Various scholars (*Weisbrod 1988; Salamon 1987; Hansmann 1986; Billis and Glennerster 1998; Putnam 1993; Kendall and Knapp 1995*) have attempted to define the nonprofit sector adopting different points of view, such as the nature of inputs and outputs, the nature of goods and services provided or the way in which these organizations distribute their surplus revenue.

According to Morris (2000), the nonprofit sector should be defined as a set of organizations that are:

- Formally constituted;
- Private;
- NonGovernmental in basic structure;
- Self-governing;
- Non-profit-distributing,
- Voluntary.

Nonprofit organizations are legally constituted institutions, operating independently from any form of government. Although they are part of the private sector, the organizations are non-profit, meaning that the profit made is not redistributed to any members, even not owners or directors, but is entirely used and dedicated to the operating mission of public interest (*Morris, 2000*). The main reason is that dues and

contributions from individuals or organizations sharing the values of the institution, and by consequence, conditioning the latter to use the profit made for operating activities, primarily finance activities. Another specificity of the sector is the high presence of voluntary workers, unpaid, largely motivated by an altruistic spirit and sharing the ideas of the organizations (*Propersi, 2012*).

The organizations composing the nonprofit sector are highly diversified in terms of size and activity. Activities include human rights, religion, sport, art, culture, environment, health, poverty alleviation and many others categories of public purpose. Since activities are so vast it is clearer to adopt a legal point of view to define the entities types composition.

Thus, entities that conduct a non-commercial activity are defined as following (*Propersi, 2012*):

- 
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Associations and Foundations recognized       | 9. Sports associations                         |
| 2. Non-recognized associations                   | 10. Non-governmental organizations             |
| 3. Committees                                    | 11. Institutions of social promotion           |
| 4. Banking associations and foundations          | 12. Opera institutions                         |
| 5. Catholic ecclesiastical bodies                | 13. Professional training centers              |
| 6. Religious institutions of other denominations | 14. Institutes of patronage                    |
| 7. Volunteer organizations                       | 15. Associations of social promotion           |
| 8. Social cooperatives                           | 16. Mutual aid society                         |
|  | 17. Non-profit organizations of social utility |
|  | 18. Social enterprises                         |
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### ***3.1.4 Classification of cross-sector's partnerships***

“There are numerous types of cross-sector collaboration. Government, business, and nonprofit organizations are constantly engaging in voluntary cooperation that is

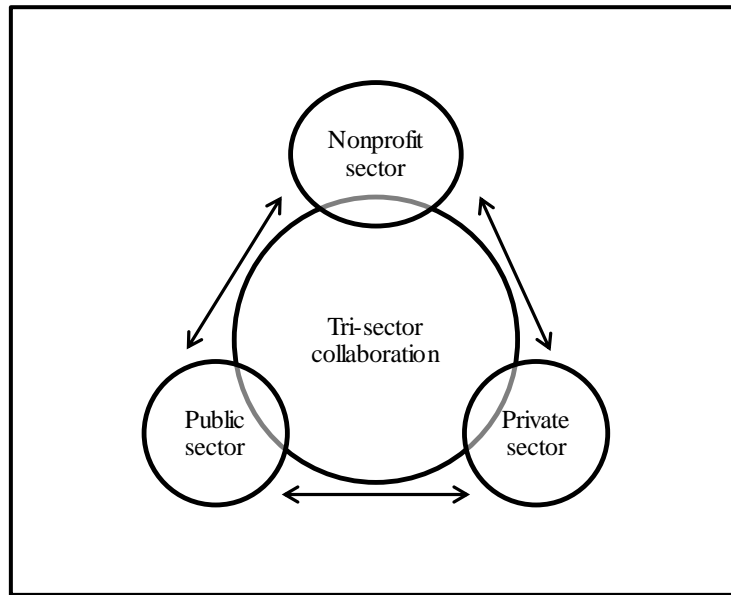
little noticed and fairly routine” (Fosler, 2001)<sup>6</sup>. To give some precise examples, the most common form is the ad hoc problem solving. The aim is to achieve public purpose in a defined period of time. We can mention for example the development of a community leadership program. Another cross-sector partnership’s type is the permanent institutional arrangement, also concerning substantive public purposes. Food banking, through the creation of a service delivery mechanism aiming to feed hungry people, is a good illustration. The classification of the diverse cross-sector partnerships can also vary the by size of the project, the number and mixture of participants, and other factors (Fosler, 2009).

The literature review and the entire research focus on the collaboration amongst businesses and nonprofit organizations as enlightened in the previous paragraphs. Because these two sectors find their significance in their diversity and complementarity, it appears essential to outline a sectorial classification. The most complete study on sectorial classification of partnerships addressing social issues has been done by Selsky and Parker in 2005, in which they identified four main types, so called ‘arenas’. These partnerships arise between business and nonprofit sectors, business and government sectors, government and nonprofit sectors, and finally amongst the three of them, so-called tri sectors. The figure below summarizes this classification schematically.

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<sup>6</sup>Fosler (2001), Working better together : How Government, Business, and Nonprofit Organizations Can Achieve Public Purposes Through Cross-Sector Collaboration , Alliances, and Partnerships, p.52

Figure 2. Illustration of the four types of cross-sector partnerships



Source: Wagner, 2011

The partnership between government and business is public-private collaboration. The main issues undertaken through this collaboration concern infrastructure development and public utility services, with social purpose. The second type, government and nonprofit organizations partnership is revolving issues of the same domain. The third partnership between nonprofit and business, being also the focus of the research, has generally been formed to deal with wider issues such as environmental sustainability, economic development, health or education. Finally, the tri-sectorial partnership, involving all partners, generally focuses on economic and community development, social services, environmental concern and healthcare (Wagner, 2011).

In the light of the challenges faced by the nonprofit sector mentioned previously, executing with new actors is becoming an essential issue in order to achieve their projects. In fact, beyond the collaboration amongst organizations of the nonprofit sector, there is a tendency to seek for new partners where companies have an important role to play (Dewaele et al. 2011).



### *Classification of profit and non-for-profit partnerships*

Concerning the focus on Business-nonprofit partnerships, it is interesting to analyze the different categories according to the aims followed. Sponsorship, responsible practices, economic cooperation and societal innovation are the four main partnership categories.

Sponsorship consists in a financial, human, material or logistic support from the company to the nonprofit organization (*Dewaele et al. 2011*). The partnership form tends to be simplistic and the corporate structure's involvement is generally low (*Mezzadri et al. 2008*). The historical initiative of this support is linked to the long term reputation of the company. Nowadays, this partnership category is facing transformation and stronger engagement is needed to achieve reputational impact (*ORSE, 2012*).

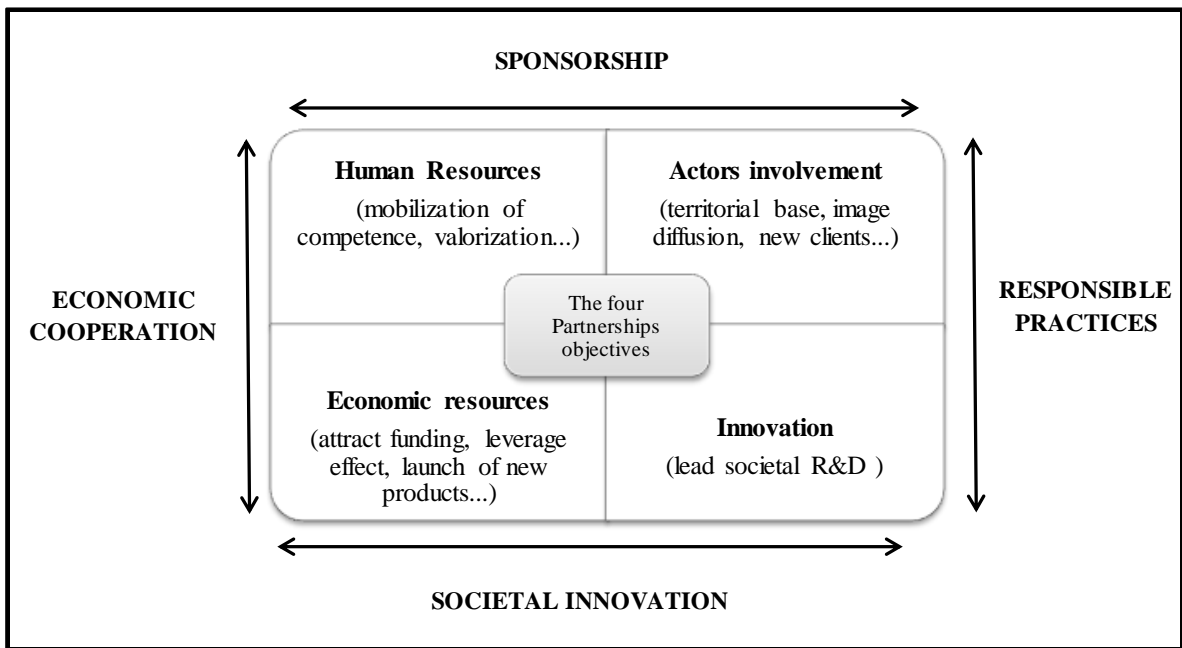
Responsible practices, however, aim to improve corporate social issues thanks to the nonprofit knowledge, in environment or disability field for instance. This partnership gives qualification to companies and helps them drive social induced changes.

Economic cooperation gathers both partners around a common project generally proposed by public authorities, to implement public policies. For instance the formation of a partnership to answer integration issues by means of the elaboration social clauses elaboration.

Finally, societal innovation concerns the elaboration of new solutions for deeper problems not yet solved by public authorities or companies. In this context, companies consider CSR as a socio-competitive instrument able to improve economic and social performances (*Mezzadri et al. 2008*). This partnership is becoming more important in the light of the growing societal needs (*Dewaele et al. 2011*).

The figure below illustrates the four categories of partnerships and introduces the detail of the objectives pursued.

Figure 3. Classification of profit and non-for-profit partnerships



Source: Le Rameau, 2011

For companies and nonprofit organizations, these four categories represent challenging scope with internal objectives and instruments that diverge for the two partners.

For the company, Human Resources embody four main purposes, that are the support to employee's private initiatives regarding social projects, mobilization of qualification within the company concerning public interest projects, involvement of nonprofit organizations within the Human Resources process and assistance to employees professional's transition. While nonprofit organizations usually search for complementary skills to realize their projects (*Dewaele, 2011*).

Then, local actors' involvement from local community, such as clients, suppliers, local authorities, citizen, and academic institutions helps spreading the image and visibility of the association. The company, through its partnership, adopts a different way to communicate reinforcement its local presence. For both partners, actor's involvement also includes the possibility to perceive new territorial needs (*ORSE, 2011*).

A partnership with an economic objective mainly means new financial resources for the nonprofit and new possibilities of cost savings or products elaboration for the company

benefiting from nonprofit knowledge. For instance microcredit or new range of products for a population in weak economic situation, have been significantly developed these years. Finally, the strategic partnerships lead to innovation issues. Nonprofits are by nature innovative actors with an important knowledge on social and societal aspects but they lack of instruments to promote their ideas. Thus, companies, in this partnership category usually bring industrialization and managerial capacities (*Dewaele, 2011*).

Each of the four partnerships covers three different sub-categories that qualifies the level of involvement, engagement, maturity, and complexity of the collaboration. The notion of time and dynamicity of the partnership is represented through the possibility of evolving from a sub-category to another. Passing through different categories means modifying objectives and strategies and changing from sub-categories to another can be observed as a partnership path.

The figure below illustrated the nine sub-categories coming from the four partnerships categories just explained. Schematically, starting from the top of the figure, we identify the four partnerships categories, followed by the nine sub-categories classification, then a definition of the concept, and finally an illustration to understand when this sub-category can occurs in practice (*Dewaele et al. 2011*).

Figure 4. Sub-categories of profit and non-for-profit partnerships' classification

Sponsorship		Societal innovation		Economic cooperation		Responsible practices		
Sponsorship	Active commitment	Sharing expertise	Societal R&D	Hybrid model	Economic cooperation	Alternative of general interest	Audit of practices	Provision of service
Donation without any direct compensation	Involvement of the company in the project particularly through staff mobilization	Sharing of competences	Development of products/services to answer special society needs	"Joint venture" in which both structures bring important competences to develop a high added value service to society	Mutual contribution to strengthen a common offer in terms of products and services	Service provided by an association, constituting a general interest's alternative with respect to a classic service	Support to drive changes within companies	Support generally provided from the association to the enterprise contributing to general interest
Illustration: calls for projects by Foundations	Illustration: various supports included competences patronage	Illustration: Expertise in social housing valuation	Illustration: medical research	Illustration: creation of a common structure dedicated to social integration	Illustration: common response to local authority's invitation to tender	Illustration: sponsoring	Illustration: environmental audit	Illustration: services provided to an enterprise helping employees integration

Source: Le Rameau, 2011

On the left part of the figure, partnerships are principally oriented to project's support, started with a pure sponsorship sub-category, principally focuses on financial or human support from the company.

Active commitment sub-category is an evolution of the sponsorship in terms of involvement of the company into the nonprofit project, through consulting or support complex projects for example. Core businesses of the two partners are usually similar.

Sharing expertise deals with an exchange of knowledge and qualification in order to improve practices, products or services.

Deeper societal investments are more significant when sub-category partnership aims to develop societal R&D in which company supports the innovation capacity of the nonprofit organization.

The Hybrid model, so called social business, concerns the creation of a common structure in order to answer public interests.

Economic cooperation arises when the partnership aims to create an economic value for each one. The most common example is the response to a ‘call for tender’.

Projects situated on the right part express a deeper desire to undertake a real corporate social responsibility and strategy from the company, benefiting from nonprofit organization’s expertise to support the changes.

Alternative of general interest sub-category is a way for the enterprise to realize a classic practice, such as waste management, but including societal dimension into the value chain instead of a simple economic solution.

Another sub-category adopted is the audit practices done by the nonprofit organization for the company in order to suggest new solutions. This intervention is particularly common in environment field, especially to reduce the energy consumption of the company.

Finally, through the provision of service’s sub-category, the nonprofit organization does a ‘commercial’ service for the company, such as cleaning activities, looking to adopt sustainable procurement logic (*Dewaele et al. 2011*).

### **3.2 Description of the French and Italian nonprofit sectors**

France and Italy have experienced two different evolutions in terms of nonprofit organizations growth and consequently partnership’s situation. Based on a historical approach, they have common characteristics allowing the comparison. Indeed associations are largely present within Roman law countries (*Anheier et al. 2003*). Moreover, the two countries are Western European countries coming from a Mediterranean civilization, and with an important influence of the Catholic religion. Furthermore, political and economic regimes have generally limited public authorities’ activities and give a powerful place to private institutions (*Gachon, 1979*).

France has one of the strongest economy of European Union and its nonprofit sector, so-called Social Economy, is booming. For France as well as for Italy, the first charitable institutions have appeared during the Middle Age, but the Italian nonprofit sector is still younger. Most of its organizations came up after the eighties whereas the

French nonprofit sector has intensively increased from 1901 with the promulgation of the law recognizing associations (*King Baudouin Foundation, 2010*)<sup>7</sup>.

Three particular common shocks from the end of the eighties had particularly slowed down the growth of the nonprofit sector. Firstly, the French revolution ideology in 1789 that *a priori* excluded social groups from having an active role and welfare function. As a result, the State is characterized by a strong and centralized monopoly of public interest. It had a strong impact on Italy where the government promulgated reforms preventing religious and charitable organizations from owning property. Then, Fascism and Nazism had dramatically affected the growth of the sector especially in Italy where few organizations survived the turbulence of the Second World War. Finally, the development of Universalistic Systems decreased the importance of the nonprofit sector allowing governments to deliver more collective services (*Borzaga, 2000*)

In 2010, the nonprofit sector in France was estimated at 700000 non-profit organizations from the study led by the European Cross-Border Database<sup>8</sup>. However, recent results are more difficult to find for the Italian sector. Indeed, quantitative data aiming to provide recent information before 2013 by the Istat, *Istituto nazionale di statistica*<sup>9</sup> in charge of doing the census of nonprofit institutions, has not been yet published. The study leads in 2003 by the Istat came up with 235000 nonprofit organizations. The trend of the last 10 years is approximately 55.2% of institutions formed..

### ***3.2.1 For-profit and non-for-profit partnerships' situation in France***

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<sup>7</sup> Web site of GIVING Europe:

<http://www.givingineurope.org/site/index.cfm?BID=1&SID=1&TID=1&MID=12&ART=215&LG=2&back=1>

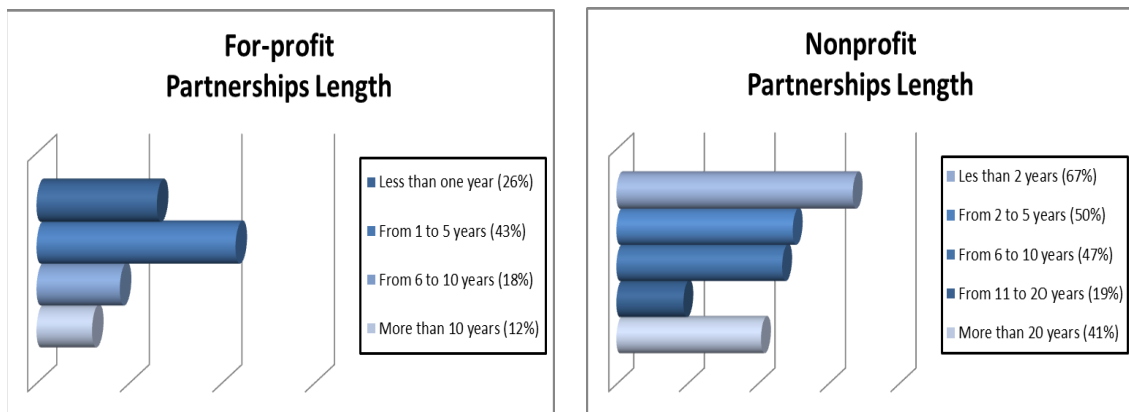
<sup>8</sup> Web site of GIVING Europe:

<http://www.givingineurope.org/site/index.cfm?BID=1&SID=1&TID=1&MID=12&ART=215&LG=2&back=1>

<sup>9</sup> National Italian Statistic Institution, 2011, The Census of Non-profit Institutions: the sector's contribution to the development and social cohesion of the Nation, ISTAT.

Few reports on the actual partnerships situation of the two countries are available. Concerning France overview although studies are infrequent, partnerships between profit and nonprofit organizations is not a recent phenomenon and tend to increase over the years (*Le Rameau, 2011*). The study of this trend led in 2011 by Le Rameau in collaboration with Chorum highlights that 21% of the French companies have experienced partnership. This number represents around 200000 companies. Among the others, 33% have made the intention to do so. The tendency is also positive regarding nonprofit organizations with 46% of them that have experienced partnerships. However, the length of the collaboration between partners is generally not very extensive, reminiscent of a long-term benefit's vision still limited. The figure below illustrated the situation of length of the partnerships for for-profits as well as nonprofits.

Figure 5. Length of the profit and non-for-profit partnerships in France



Source: Le Rameau, 2011

Source: Le Rameau, 2011

Almost half of the companies' partnerships last less than 5 years. This trend can be explained by the arrival of smaller companies. In fact, big companies usually have experienced partnerships for more than 10 years. On the nonprofit side, position is more complex because at the same time, 67% of partnerships not exceed 2 years and 41% are longer than 20 years.

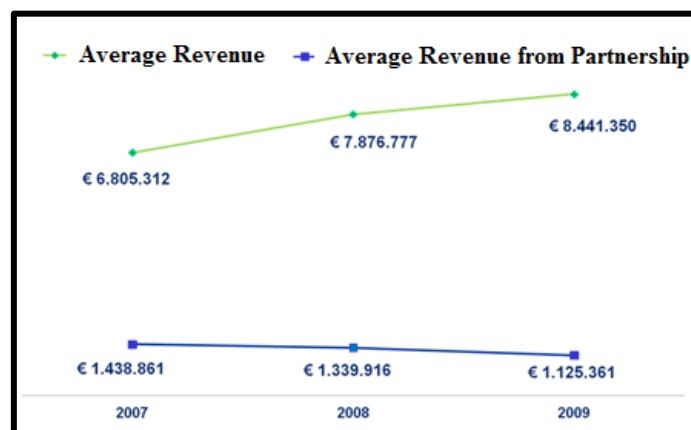
Nevertheless, the study confirms an estimation of the future relationships amongst the two actors, as a optimistic ones. 52% of nonprofit organizations conceive that collaboration will intensify and 72% of companies are motivated to reinforce or

diversify their partnerships. Partnership's movement appears to be a good opportunity of development and an alternative to circle the deeper competition.

### 3.2.2 For-profit and non-for-profit partnerships 'situation in Italy

The partnership's situation in Italy is less developed. Although the phenomenon is growing, the tendency is slowing down by the presence of strong obstacles and prejudices blocking cooperation. For instance the study carried on by the SDA Bocconi, "*Aziende e nonprofit, partnership in crescita*" in 2012<sup>10</sup>, demonstrates that the main impediments curbing the formation of partnerships are the lack of managerial understanding, the mutual trust or the absence of strategic planning. Quantitative information is scarce but the following figure gives an illustration of the actual situation. In fact, the diminution of financial revenue used to demonstrate the slowing down tendency of partnerships is an indicator expressing a decrease in the confidence of the partnership.

Figure 6. Nonprofit organizations' simple average revenue and average revenue deriving from profit and non-for-profit partnerships



Source: Baldassarre, 2012

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.vita.it/non-profit/volontariato/aziende-non-profit-partnership-in-crescita.html>



Average revenue deriving from partnerships is actually decreasing whereas simple average revenue is swelling. Thus, nonprofit sector revenue is growing but the decrease of partnerships financial part traduces a pessimistic perception of the collaboration. Overall income estimation shows that only 13% of the income of nonprofit organizations derived from partnerships with companies.

The idea that long-term benefits are not yet perceived is reinforced by the tendency to seek for specific projects characterized by short term collaboration. The mistrust and the perception of risks when entering in partnerships mostly come from the nonprofit organizations at 60% while 75% of for-profit companies are willing to go through it. According to the research published in 2012, led by SDA Bocconi in collaboration with Mediafriends<sup>11</sup>, presence of robust obstacles to collaboration is confirmed. Among 400 nonprofit organizations and companies, just 16% and 20% respectively realized co-business initiatives. Amongst these partnerships the most simplistic forms are adopted, which are simple donations and sponsorships. In Italy the perception of benefits through the partnerships from nonprofit organizations seems to still be plug into a simple way to raise more funds whereas for-profit organizations express a deeper desire to enter upon long term agreements.

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<sup>11</sup><http://www.viasarfatti25.unibocconi.it/notizia.php?idArt=9551>

## **4. Profit and non-for-profit organizations: two different sectors with particular, personal and complementary characteristics motivating and restraining the partnerships' formation**

### **4.1 Insights into the sectorial motivations and the mutual benefits stemming from the partnership**

Cross-sector partnerships, particularly between businesses and nonprofit organizations have become significant and relevant especially due to their increasing numbers, expressing the idea of a growing mutual motivation leading to increase collaboration. Nonetheless, the two partners are described in the literature as being different by nature, chiefly in terms of objectives, cultures, and operating styles (*Walter et al, 2003*). The pursuit of the sector complementarities is one of the results of these differences. It appears relevant to understand the partners' sectorial motivations and their mutual benefits. However Strategic value is often a complex equation and the more involved and integrated the alliance, the more complex the calculation (*Austin, 2000*). Thus it is adequate to analyze the possible risks and barriers characterizing the relationship, and draw up the final observation on the principal factors and criteria to successfully manage the partnership.

#### ***4.1.1 The principal motivations stimulating the partnerships' formation***

Corporations and nonprofit organizations are increasingly recognizing the benefits of collaborating on a wide range of social and environmental issues (*Dennis et al. 2003*).

The partnership classification highlighted the different categories of partnerships according to the objectives pursued by the partners. Some authors, such as Wymer and Samu (2003) emphasize the correlation between the motivations to collaborate and the categories of partnership. For example, with respect to the sponsorship category, the simplest type that aims at making a donation from the company to the nonprofit. As a result, the company is motivated by the simple desire of publicity and the nonprofit organization by the need of additional funding. In contrast, a 'higher' partnership involvement, such as the societal innovation category, results in both the nonprofit organization and the private company to be motivated and attracted by a higher social impact (Wymer, Samu, 2003).

On the contrary, other authors believe in the idea that motivation is shared regardless of the partnership relationship. For instance, Koch (2005) argues that cross-sector partnerships constitute an important way to address complex social issues, and so the willingness to enter upon collaboration is pushed by the idea that private and non-profit sectors have the same motivation: the stabilization of society (Koch, 2005)<sup>12</sup>.

Although the degree of incentive varies among organizations, depending on their evolution such as their path, vision, values and members, there is a general force enhancing the willingness to enter upon collaboration that tends to be consistent within the same sector. To understand all the aspects of the sectorial collaboration it is essential to review the stimuli of motivation according to the sector characteristics.

#### *A sectorial analysis of the motivational factors*

The literature emphasizes a great interest from the two organizations to enter upon agreement, but their distinctive motivations and expectations make the partnership both complex to establish and stimulating in an opportunistic way for the two partners (Wagner, 2011). The literature on cross-sector's drivers for collaboration is numerous and vast and it has been difficult to summarize the main common findings.

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<sup>12</sup><http://aspd.revues.org/355#tocfrom1n2>

The following table summarizes the main elements of the motivational forces enhancing collaboration. The table is elaborated from recent and relevant studies on cross-sector's stimuli for collaboration. Elements of the table are extracted from the results and findings of four complementary researches: Tennyson et al (2008), Koch (2005), Tabaa (2012) and Coordination Sud et Medef (2010).

Table 1. Main motivational forces of the private and the nonprofit sectors enhancing their willingness to enter upon partnership

Motivations of the Private sector	Motivations of the Nonprofit sector
= Internal mobilization: employees expectations	= Unable to achieve mission alone
= Civil society: customer requirements or corporate legitimacy	= Response to the requirements imposed by donors for private sector collaboration
= Globalization of markets: need to improve infrastructure or answer lower income's needs	= Exploring new fundings and innovation opportunities
= Reporting tools requirements: GRI or transparency	= Increase scale and impact by harnessing power with private sector
= Optimizing results by joining human and financial resources	= Structuration of NGOs: need to recruit from companies
= Risk management: need to improve value chain	= New for-profit ventures spinning off from NGOs
= Better understanding of local social problems: need complementary knowledge	= Avoid competition with the private sector for the same funding
= Development of technologies at low costs	= Generate more resources
= Leverage credibility and reputation within public	= Gain experience and knowledge to increase credibility and effectiveness
= External mobilization: customers expectations	= Increase visibility
= Attain short and/or long term economic benefits	= The will to enter in CSR strategy of the enterprise
= Engage all the stakeholders	= Favorable global context: big international challenges
= Avoid potential conflict	= Need of complementary expertise
= Raise of awareness from the direction: meeting with an NGO	
= Need to establish a CSR strategy	
= Fiscal reasons	

Source: adaptation from the studies of Tennyson et al (2008), Koch (2005), Tabaa (2012) and Coordination Sud et Medef (2010)

Tennyson (2008) and Tabbaa (2012) highlight the intrinsic degree of motivation depending on the sector's evolution. Organizations from the nonprofit sector are yet involved in answering social problems. Thus, finding new financial resources, acquiring a better managerial knowledge, participating in the corporate social responsibility's strategy (CSR) of the company and enhancing their visibility, motivate them. Coordination Sud et Medef (2010) confirms this statement by making a statistic observation regarding the growing number of indicators, such as the increasing number of positions dedicated to fundraising and relational activities created to reinforce the contacts with the private sector, as well as company's responses to 'call tender'. This assessment demonstrates the ability and willingness to enter upon relation.

According to Tennyson (2008) and Tabbaa (2012), organizations from the private sector, on the contrary, are pushed to collaborate because of the raise of awareness with regard to the social problems, the need to benefit from NGOs expertise and skills on local situations, the need to mobilize their employees or customers around social activities or just to increase their reputation. Koch (2005) confirms the position of the corporations by adding that they especially need the knowledge from the nonprofit sector to win over new markets, create new product and contributions.

An important and common aspect illustrating the motivation and strengthening the relationship is the CSR activity. Because companies face the pressure to be more responsible, and the nonprofit sector is an exemplary partner in this field, CSR activities are growing. Tennyson (2008) and Tabbaa (2012) put in evidence the presence of external and extrinsic motivational forces. The most cited factors are the increase of global social challenges that need the knowledge from the two sectors to be solved; the need to better answer all the stakeholders' expectations, including the civil society. Koch (2005) sustains the need for the profit sector to improve the risk management, involve the stakeholders, respect the legislation on environment, reporting tools, and improve productivity. CSR is a wide range of activities in which the partners can collaborate. In fact according to the EU commission, CSR in a corporation is "the voluntarily taking on commitments which go beyond common regulatory and conventional requirements, which they would have to respect in any case. Companies endeavor to raise the standards of social development, environmental protection and respect of fundamental rights and embrace an open governance, reconciling interests of

various stakeholders in an overall approach of quality and sustainability”(*European Commission, Green Paper, p.4, 2001*)<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, nonprofit organizations are a perfect partner to undertake this strategy, and the collaboration represents a way to maintain and develop firm competitive advantage (*Tennyson et al. 2008*).

The principal concepts of the table demonstrate the need to seek and share special skills and competences among sectors, not only just for the organization’s competitiveness but also for the society itself, currently facing the necessity to develop new solutions to answer increasing social problems. These two motivational forces, intrinsic and extrinsic are complementary. In fact, the private sector can find a profitable benefit when trying to reach new markets to expand the accessibility of its products to low income, and nonprofit knowledge on local situations represent a strategic actor to enter upon collaboration. NGOs are the best partner for ‘field knowledge’ because of its proximity and its trust relationship with the community, local authorities and institutions. Economic local inequalities are not anymore a matter of competitive advantage but can be potential risks for the serene development of the company’s activities that require stable conditions (*ORSE, 2012*).

The approach of sectorial complementarity tends to gather the opinions of various scholars. Nevertheless, although the major part of the arguments stays coherent among themselves, different views can be adopted to explain the gap filling skills. In fact, just as CSR activities used to be specific competences of the nonprofit organizations, businesses have also developed peculiar ones. Watson (2010) affirms that human resources are the biggest challenges to nonprofit organizations. The author makes the observation that operating training, retention of workers, issues regarding low-wages, attraction of highly qualified candidates, or worker’s carrier evolution, are critical aspects posing real problems for the mission’s efficacy and slowing down the general functioning of the organization. Consequently, collaborating with the private sector can be the real key to solve this challenge and become more competitive. Companies can

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<sup>13</sup>European commission (2001), Promoting a European Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility, Green Paper, p.4, Brussels, 18.7.2001  
<http://www.allianceanalyst.com/Drucker.html>

provide a larger scale of job placement opportunities, new program funding as well as practical and managerial knowledge, that aim at improving the organizational efficiency.

Thus, the two sectors have developed different skills and knowledge resulting from their natural diverging evolution, that are now viewed as complementary to achieve their goals and face the new worldwide situation. More this raise of awareness will be generalized, the more collaboration will be perceived as a long-term strategy to establish local activities (*ORSE, 2012*). However not only do they need each other to go ahead but together they can reach mutual and strategic benefits.

#### ***4.1.2 The principal benefits resulting from the partnerships***

Dealing with benefits from collaboration induces a direct and concrete link with the motivations to enter upon partnerships. As we have just analyzed, collaboration can provide more funding, but also, even more importantly, it can permit the access to knowledge-based resources or improve the quality and effectiveness of the products, programs and services. This example represents the benefits from the collaboration deriving from the initial motivations (*Coordination Sud et Medef 2010*).

##### *An analysis of the mutual partnerships' benefits*

Starting from the fact that partnerships between profit and nonprofit organizations are nowadays more than simple philanthropy, benefits from collaboration are more elaborated. To illustrate this declaration, the nonprofit sector, for instance, expects from its partner a deeper involvement and support in order to better achieve its missions and programs, that are becoming more difficult to realize alone (*Watson, 2010*). The private sector, however, recently facing important changes regarding the introduction and need of a real corporate social responsibility, expects from the nonprofit organization to help introducing and maintaining the changes induced by this activity (*Sacconi, 2004*).



Selsky and Parker's study (2005), deals with cross-sector partnerships addressing social issues, stresses the general outcomes and benefits for the two sectors. Three different levels illustrate the benefits from the partnership: the direct impact on the issue and its stakeholders; the impact on building capacity, knowledge and reputational capital attracting new resources; and the influence on social policy or system change.

The first level of benefit, the direct impact, constitutes the positive contributions the collaboration has on sales, target, market result or general revenue. It is generally the private sector that most often measure these features, constituting one of the main differences between these two institutions (*Selsky, Parker, 2005*). Companies have 'lucrative purpose' and the pursue of the annual revenue is the best instrument to measure the corporate performance, whereas nonprofit organizations do not have this instrument, they are not lucrative organizations, and they are characterized on the contrary by the complexity of the measurement of its social goals (*Propersi, 2012*).

The second level congregates all forms of social capital benefits. Among them the principal are the growing interest from the public through media exposure where the two partners expect to impact on their reputation, image, brand and to attain social respect, trust from the public as well as their loyalty. Human capital is also an important feature of social capital. Social capital defines the acquisition of new knowledge obtained through learning from the collaboration. This aspect is becoming always more important for the two sectors. Finally, the last level of outcome desired from the collaboration should affect policy and system changes. Policy and system are characterized by the mechanisms, structures or procedures through which an organization achieves its missions.

Thus, the benefits deal with project efficacy, in which the collaboration should positively influence the project success, the achievement of a special program or the number of people that have been affected by the collaboration. It is the most difficult outcome to conceptualize and to measure (*Selsky and Parker, 2005*).

Mezzadri (2008) identifies three areas of benefits from the collaboration if this latter is managed on win-win logic. The following table highlights the expectations emphasized divided into the three corporate areas: human capital, reputation, and economic and financial.

Table 2. Benefits from the partnerships

<b>Human Capital</b>	<b>Reputational</b>	<b>Economic and financial</b>
Increase of the sense of belonging among employees	Higher and better visibility among public opinion	Increase sales volume: through a higher client loyalty or new contracts
Positive influence on employees motivation in carrying out their duties	Campaign and media interests toward the projects realized	Reduction of costs: through tax benefits for instance
Reduction of the turnover and better productivity	Better stakeholders perception toward the enterprise: due to a higher involvement in CSR for instance	Access to new markets otherwise precluded (collaboration with local entities required to enter)
Broader interest from the human resources due to the company's involvement in CSR activities	Social implications can increase the client loyalty and improve the communication with social partners in the long run	Development of innovative processes aimed at expanding the products/services of the enterprise
Better communication of the guiding values of the company toward the business mission and vision	Reduction of the 'negative' campaigns toward the company	Higher transparency and better relation with financial institutions (access to credit facilitate)
Acquisition of new competences and knowledge		

Source: adaptation from Mezzadri, 2008

Managing the partnership on win-win logic depends on the presence of shared values between the two partners. Motivations and benefits will depend on motivational factors enhancing the collaboration. The Austin's study (2000) illustrates this concept by explaining the four special drivers strengthening both the motivation to collaborate and the mutual benefits: alignment of strategy, mission, and values; personal connections and relationships; generated value and shared visions; and continual learning.

The elements composing the first driver express the level of conformity amongst the partners that increase their willingness to start a partnership. A high degree of partner's harmony, through the alignment of the strategy, communal mission and strong-shared values, positively impacts on their relationship and their trust, inciting their willingness to collaborate.

Since collaboration is usually driven by people, personal connections and relationships are essential motivational factors. The more the members of the two organizations are emotionally and motivationally evolved in the collaboration, the better and stronger the interconnections amongst people of the two organizations and their willingness to work together will be.

A common vision of the objectives is essential to motivate the partners to enter upon agreement, but it should go along with the generation of benefits, fundamental aspect whether to construct or to maintain the collaboration.

To end up with the analysis, continual learning is an important criterion. In fact, a win-win outcome from learning through the collaboration permits to increase the value's perception for the two partners (Austin, 2000).

Thus, motivations and benefits are naturally linked together and actually transcending the areas of the company and the nonprofit organization. For example, the initial motivation could be the need of visibility for the two institutions, generally expecting to impact on reputation, providing benefits on funding/sales or quality of program/products. The relevant point of this analysis is the sizeable need shown by the sectors to work together, share their skills, in order to be more competitive.

Notwithstanding, collaboration requires a continual and correct management in front of the large risks that can provoke the failure of the partnership for the two organizations (*Mezzadri, 2008*).

## **4.2 Insights into the possible risks, current barriers and principal factors of success**

### ***4.2.1 The principal risks restraining the partnerships***

The value determination received by the partners from the collaboration must also exceed the costs and risks of the collaboration relative to the benefits. Costs involve the resources that need to be deployed to manage the collaboration. Management and staff time are the scarcest resources that need to be considered, and reputational damage is considered one of the major risk of the collaboration (*Austin, 2000*). As a result, benefits can be very high but the collaboration also contains important risks that are able to affect the two partners in the end, such as the resign of employees and/or volunteers, reputational damage, distrust from the stakeholders, decrease of sales, failure of the program, loss of money and time (*ORSE, 2012*). Cross-sector partnerships are especially difficult to manage because partners tend to have diverging ways of functioning, missions and objectives that can create unexpected conflicts and disagreements. The inherent distrust and lack of experience when collaborating lead to an outcome that is not always successful (*Denis et al.2003*).

In order to cover the issue on the possible risks to overpass when entering upon agreement, the review of literature put in evidence two overlapping classifications. Firstly, a sectorial classification of the risks, divided into the nonprofit sector and the private ones, permit to realize the challenge of gathering two structures considered to be opposite by nature (*Walter et al, 2003*). However, the partnership itself also contained inherent risks and an overview of this classification is appropriated.

#### *A sectorial classification of the risks restraining the partnerships*

The classification of the risks divided by sectors aimed at giving a general overview of the issues that can face the two actors. A good knowledge of the possible challenges can help organizations understanding the differences, anticipating the difficulties and resolving the problems before and during the agreement (*Dewaele et al,*

2011). Historically, organizations from the nonprofit sector have been used to denounce companies, generally big companies or multinationals, for their bad practices. Because these latter are usually present in several sectors, a partnership establishing in one of them can expose the companies to be attacked in the others sectors, probably leading to an important reputational damaged. Collaborating for the organizations from the nonprofit sector is a sensitive situation because they have always gained their credibility from the society thanks to their independence (ORSE, 2005). A recent study identifies ten principal risks divided between the two sectors, that can negatively affect the company or the nonprofit organizations illustrated in the table below (Dewaele et al, 2011).

Table 3. Sectorial classification of the main possible risks arising from the partnerships

Private sector	Nonprofit sector
- The choice of a ‘wrong’ partner	- Conflict of image
- Green washing attack	- 'Instrumentalization' or manipulation
- Overinvestment in term of money	- Loss of independence
- Overinvestment in term of human capital	- Internal conflict
- Legal aspect	- Legal aspect

Source: adaptation from Dewaele et al, 2011

Making a wrong selection concerning the right partner to collaborate with can have important damages for the company. This risk covers negative reputational repercussions coming from the nonprofit image such as media scandal, to the non-viable project of the nonprofit organization having economic consequences for the company (Dewaele et al, 2011).

Green washing means that the company is accused of using the association to hide negative social and environmental actions; it can have serious impact on the long-term credibility of the company. More slightly, Business can be impacted by a loss of sales in the case of a nonprofit scandal (Walter, Wymer, 2003).

Partnerships require an investment in terms of time, human and financial resources. Real values need to be associated to the collaboration to avoid internal conflicts such as the resentment of its members. Evenly, a non-justifiable financial investment will cause the shareholder's misunderstandings regarding investment choices of the company. The higher the investment in terms of resources, the higher internal and external damages affects the company.

To conclude with businesses' risks, because strategic partnerships between companies and nonprofit organizations are still a new trend, few specialized legal resources have been promulgated. It is not rare to observe legal or fiscal problems arising during the collaboration (*Dewaele et al, 2011*).

Then, the first risk the nonprofit organization can occur is ton its reputation. In fact, collaboration can highly impact if the company does not act 'ethically'. Usually, a reputational crisis damages the funding activity of the nonprofit (*Walter, Wymer, 2003*). This risk often arises in relationships in which the nonprofit organization's name is associated with a company and its product. For instance in a cause relating marketing activity, the company implements a marketing activity that contributes to a specific cause with a specific amount. Consumers use to believe that the nonprofit has also participated in the evaluation of the product, and so is directly linked to the product and the company. Not only is the nonprofit exposed to whatever happens to the product and business but the impact of the advertising usage can bring suits from several customers concerns and deceptions (*Austin, 2000*). In order to prevent this problem having consequent repercussions for the survival of the organization, the latter can elaborate a code of ethics excluding some sectors such as the nuclear, the armament, the alcohol, the tobacco or the game.

'Instrumentalization' of the nonprofit organization is observed in a situation where the association uses the partnership for general reputation, image or opinion without a real engagement or development of a final project legitimizing the partnership with a company (*Dewaele et al, 2011*). In this case the organization can lose its credibility putting in danger its viability. The risk of manipulation leads to the same consequences than the 'instrumentalization' but the process is different. In this case the company consciously manipulates the nonprofit to ensure that this latter attacks a competitor (*ORSE, 2005*).

The loss of independence is one of the biggest fears of the nonprofit that can hamper its survival. Partnership should not hinder the freedom of the nonprofit even concerning eventual critics against the company. Generally, financial dependence is the highest risk that can occur. The nonprofit financially depends more on the business to fulfill its mission and a possible dissolution can influence its viability (*Dewaele et al, 2011*). The nonprofit also faces the risk to loss the control of its brand or image in the case that the relationship allows the corporation to use its name and logo. To keep away from it, the nonprofit organization can limit the budget deriving from the partnership (*ORSE, 2005*). In agreement with the companies' risk of overinvestment, the association should guarantee the internal adhesion to the partnership in order to avoid conflicts and to enhance motivation. The organization should be stable and resistant to resist in the long-term.

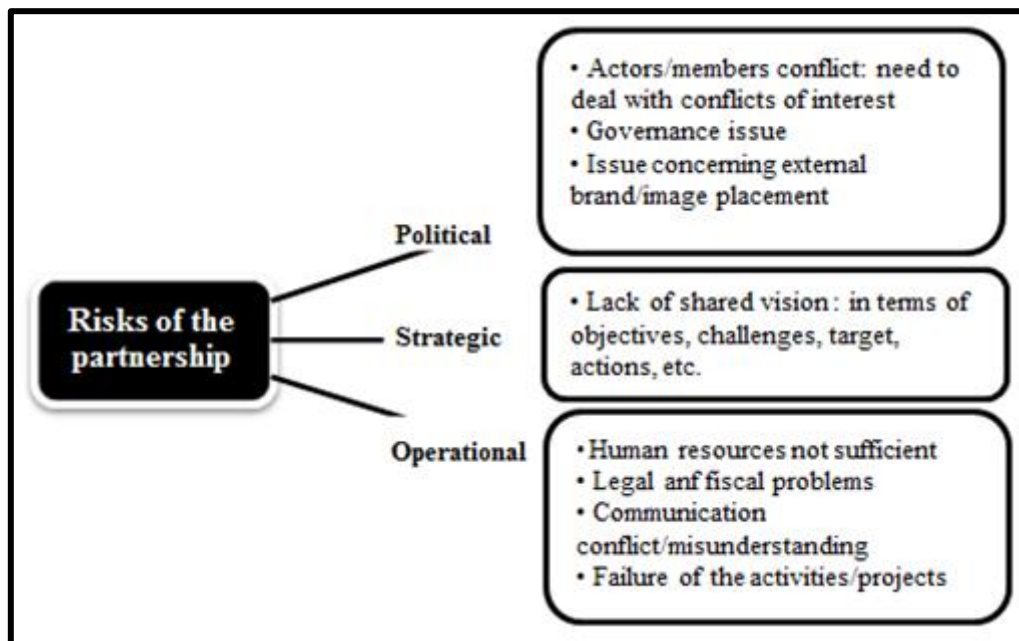
Thus, this table identifies the principal risks that can emerge principally concerning the nature of the two structures and their different way to perceive the collaboration. Taking into account all the possible internal and external risks is essential to avoid the reclassification of the partnerships from a category to another because of the non-fulfillment of the duty predicted. For instance reclassification from sponsorship to service providing will cause the induce review of the fiscal conditions and can impact on the actual structure and investment. Legal and fiscal aspects, even if they completely differ from the two organizations, need to be examining attentively (*Dewaele et al, 2011*). Understanding and preventing these risks is fundamental. Ensuring that the two structures are focalized on common objectives and that none of the two institutions is using the other to a simple reputational purpose is crucial (*ORSE, 2005*).

#### *An analysis of the partners' common risks*

More and more, partnerships have a strategic importance for the two structures because they offer decisive opportunities, and therefore business and nonprofit face common risks. This categorization permits to complete the focus with a general picture concerning the partnership itself. The figure below summarizes the risks divided into three dimensions of the partnership: political, strategic and operational, that can have negative consequences on the collaboration or more seriously, make the partnership fail.

For each dimension, the most frequent risks happening during the collaboration are listed.

Figure 7. Partners' common risks within a partnership



Source: adaptation from Dewaele et al, 2011

Political issues are related to external relations, communicational conflicts and governance aspects. For instance, two organizations can be spoiled in case of media scandal due to the non-fulfillment of the supposed project, or by the internal conflict regarding the philanthropy action not shared by the employees. Usually, the risk is higher for the nonprofit because its ability to raise funds from private donors can be questioned, threatening its survival.

Strategic risks concern the objective the institutions want to reach together, gathering the components of the elaboration, implementation and realization of the project including the problems of the partnership shared vision. Internal conflicts are easy to emerge and difficult to resolve, thus strategic aspects should be clear for the two institutions (Dewaele et al, 2011). The strength and strategic importance of the alliance allow the partners to weather the criticism and even to assist in overcoming the causal



problems. However the strategic value is often a complex equation and the more involved and integrated the alliance, the more complex the calculation (*Austin, 2000*). Operational dimension, instrument and way chosen to manage the relationship, comprised all risks stemming from executional and legal aspects. For instance, when the partnership involves the creation of a new structure to permit the achievement of mutual objectives, members of advocacy group can put pressure on the partnership due to their negative opinion of the collaboration, usually for value and integrity reasons, leading to the loss of support due to these groups (*Walter, Wymer, 2003*).

Thus, collaboration can bring determinant opportunities but the exposure to risks and scandal media is a close frontier. The deeper the alliance, the more exposed each partner are to what happens to the other. However, that depth also enables the partners to manage this risk more effectively (*Austin, 2000*). Generally speaking, corporate and brand reputation, sales and market share, credibility, shareholders and employees resentment, constitute the main possible risks that can occur from the collaboration, for the sectorial approach but also for the shared risks. Usually, risks are higher for the nonprofit organization because businesses are better armed to respond and recover from attacks, mainly thanks to their financial resources helping them to use the communication channel easily. Furthermore, companies' customers are ordinarily less ideological than the traditional private donors of the nonprofit are, and can make product choices on a more rational basis. To overpass the possible risks, an appropriate and continued communication regarding the benefits from the collaboration towards the stakeholders can permit a better stability and avoid turbulences (*ORSE, 2012*).

#### ***4.2.2 The principal barriers impeding the good convergence and cooperation***

Various scholars have linked the possible risks to the sectorial barriers, constraining the good functioning and collaboration amongst the partners. For instance, risks of communicational conflict on brand positioning or lack of shared vision is directly linked to cultural and historical barriers separating the two sectors.

The study led by *IFRI* and *Institut de l'entreprise*<sup>14</sup>, respectively the French institute of external relations and the business institute, on the relation between nonprofit and company, gives a general overview of the impediments restraining the good cooperation. The two institutes have concluded on four main obstacles: perception distance, organizational differences, reputation and dependence risk.

Perception distance covers all the cultural impediments coming from a misunderstanding of the two actors due to their different worlds. Nonprofit has grown as an actor of militancy and civic action, while companies have been propelled by capitalism vision and are driven by shareholders' value maximization (*Fougier, Pô, 2005*). These differences have led to the creation of cross-sector partnerships in which the nonprofit organizations usually have a core mission aimed at answering social issues, while corporations are in business to earn profits and generate acceptable financial returns for their shareholders (*Denis et al, 2003*). Although a real awareness on the benefits from collaboration has been noticed, the hostility the two institutions have been passed through has left traces of important mistrust (*Fougier, Pô, 2005*).

Organizational competences are also completely diverging. Nonprofit's lack of professionalism, market mechanisms and knowledge and management skills. Firms are characterized, on the contrary, by possessing a high sense of control and measure of their activities, pushing them to adopt a transparent and responsible attitude. These two opposite representations have resulted in the formation of barriers impeding the collaboration and traduced the difficulties to agree on political, strategic and operational vision and management.

Risks classifications have evidenced important reputational challenges, often at the source of the collaboration failure. The historic relationship of the two sectors has been quite critized and suspicious, especially from the nonprofit to the business (*Selsk, Parker 2005*). High visibility is frequently a motivation to do a partnership but it can be difficult to manage in harmony, because vision and target are so different, and relations have always been hostile and mistrusted. Cross-sector partnerships are nowadays in the

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<sup>14</sup> Fougier, Pô (2005), Les relations ONG-entreprises : bilan et perspectives, Synthèse des réflexions du groupe de travail Ifri-Institut de l'entreprise

light of the attention of the media, and pressures on the image they can diffuse about the collaboration add difficulties to the cooperation. Private donations or usual consumers are different targets wishing different images and behaviors, and so the message from the communication the two organizations want to promote is generally different and misunderstanding is frequent (*Fougier, Pô, 2005*).

Finally, financial asymmetry introduces a complex element to manage the relation creating an important barrier. Financial, human and logistical resources of the nonprofit usually make it difficult for evaluation (*Propersi, 2012*). In one way nonprofit sector needs companies funding to achieve their operations, but in another way they are afraid to be dependent and run the risk to loss control on their activities or free speech (*Fougier, Pô, 2005*).

#### ***4.2.3 Elements to take into consideration to prevent risks and overpass barriers***

The vast literature on risks expresses the importance to take in account the complexity of the partnership management; mainly coming from the divergent evolutions, the two structures have followed (*Tabbaa, 2012*). Definitions of outcome and measurement of success in cross sector partnerships are beginning to receive a growing attention from scholars (*Wagner, 2011*). Dealing with barriers and impediments permit to identify some factors that make possible the success of the collaboration, or at least facilitating it. In front of the large risks classification, it is not surprising to observe that scholars have adopted different approaches to identify the factors enhancing the success of the relationship between nonprofits and businesses.

#### ***Choosing the right partner as a fundamental cornerstone for success***

A great part of the authors dealing with success of cross-sector collaboration has broached the notion of partner selection as a critical element for collaboration. Selecting the right partner is important to secure mutual benefits. In fact, to guarantee a dynamic partnership, the two organizations need to carefully examine the partner the most likely to have the knowledge, expertise, and experience to work effectively with (*Denis et al,*

2003). Moreover, sectors need to protect and advance their own mission, to be coherent with their reputation, implying the necessity to find a partner consistent with their organization core business (*Jupp, 2000*).

The notion of relational characteristics, as main elements of success, strengthens the notion of partner selection. According to Wymer and Samu (2003), partner selection is the first requirement to ensure that the collaboration goes as smoothly as wished in terms of management and cooperation.

By examining and choosing the right partner, the two organizations can ensure coherence amongst their values and missions, determinant for the good continuity of relationship (*Mezzadri in 2008*).

The choice of the right partner is essential but it has to be completed by a real engagement and involvement of all the actors concerned by the collaboration to reduce the possible conflicts and enhance cooperation. Through a good communication and motivation from the leaders, a common atmosphere of mission and interest can be created. In this way, resentment and inter/intra members conflicts can be reduced and inter cooperation accentuated (*Jupp, 2000*). Open, clear, frequent communication between, and within the organizations will help to prevent internal conflicts, resentment, feeling of neglect and unfairness. In this way misunderstanding, disagreement, distrust, coming from cultural barriers can be limited, and trust installed.

#### *Considering all the different phases of the collaboration and promote interconnections*

Challenges are present in all the different phases of the collaboration. The choice of the partner is relevant for the success but a continual management is also essential. Selsky and Parker (2005) suggest a detail of the outcome present in the main phases of the cross-sector collaboration, adopting a framework going from the formation, the implementation and the outcome measurement of the collaboration. Another approach considers the success through the linkage among the functional. These activities include communication; planning, policy development, decision making and advocacy; pooling resources and Joint operations. The objective is to promote the exchange of information, resources, roles, responsibilities and services along the activities chain and amongst

members, enabling the common sense of belonging. If the functional activities are established more or less as institutional changes, they contribute to the community's overall stock of civic capacity (Jupp, 2000). Moreover, the context in which the partnership grows is very important to maintain the good cooperation. People, place and governance need to be shared and common. In fact, to avoid member's conflict and communication problems a clear and coherent defined place to develop the mission needs to be chosen with a real involvement of the people affected. Governance system allows avoiding legal troubles, and enhances the climate of the collaboration. Indeed, the success is partly determined by a supportive climate including a good leadership, social capital allowing shared information and interconnection, common visions and values, mediating institution, right mix of resources from public and nonprofit and a philanthropic strength (Tennyson et al. 2008).

#### *Establishing a common and shared vision to facilitate trust amongst partners*

Throughout the literature, a high quantity of factors is strengthening the collaboration. Among them elements contributing to the development of a common vision and share of the entire partnership are dominant.

For instance, Austin (2000) analyzes four collaboration drivers, that are alignment of strategy, mission, and values; personal connection and relationships; value generation and shared visioning and continual learning, contributing to the merger of interests and thus to the success. These elements are also in accordance with the convergence forces of Jupp (2000). The author highlights the need to manage the partnership evolution through agreement and consensus of the partners and all the actors on the joint issues such as public purpose, collaboration goal, functional objectives, and mission.

All these drivers enhancing collaboration are crucial to establish a climate of trust. Trust in the relationship is unavoidable to manage two organizations so different in all their operating activities and visions. A good transparency, regular communication and meeting, and the assignment of the right leadership (ORSE, 2012) favorably affect trust. By examining the correlation between trust and performance, one of the results stresses a positive relationship between trust and conflict reduction (Zaheer et al, 1998).

Indeed, because the two organizations are so different, perfect convergence of interest is difficult to reach and disagreements and conflicts can be frequent. Atmosphere of trust enhances harmonization of internal conflict and improve exchange and interconnection. Strong creation of inter organizational trust, coming from partners relational exchange, enable negotiations and mutual dealings, leading to reduce global conflicts of the partnerships (*Zaheer et al, 1998*). Trust can be accelerated by the designation of two referents of the two organizations, the creation of a system of governance stable and liable, the adoption of clear rules on finance resources to avoid suspicion, the establishment of a clear cooperation structure and the promotion of an active communication aimed at motivating and mobilizing the members (*Fougier, Pô, 2005*). Thus, constructing a profitable relationship between the two different worlds is not an easy task and many barriers need to be overcome. Fortunately, motivations, expectations and benefits are very important and essential nowadays for the two sectors evolution and prosperity. Historically distinct, the structure of the institutions are by nature and culturally very different, accentuating the managerial and behavioral divergences, provoking distrust (*Fougier, Pô, 2005*).

Many researches deal with best way to create and maintain the partnership along the main steps phases and amongst all the actors and guides and methodology have been multiplied.

## 5. The relevance of the knowledge transfer in cross-sector partnerships

Since many years, various scholars have been studying the impact of knowledge, created within the firm itself and from the external environment, as a critical source and resource able to improve the organizational performance (*Grant 1996; Mowery et al. 1996; Zaheer 1998; Cumming, 2003; Levin 2004; Becker 2006 ; Mitton 2007 ; Van Wijk et al. 2008*). Indeed, a growing interest toward the critical ability of organizations to efficiently use and acquire knowledge as a vital origin of competitive advantage is observed (*Chauvel, Despres, 2002*), and justified by the dominant view pointing out that organizational knowledge transfer is positively associated with performance and innovation (*Lane et al ,2001*)<sup>15</sup> .

Mowery et al (1996) establish that one of the main arguments sustaining the motivation to enter upon partnership has been the acquisition of new skills and capabilities from the partner. From this period, strategic collaborations never ceased to rise and scholars have intensified their attention on inter-firm collaboration and the acquirement of new resources and capabilities (*Panjaitan, Noorderhaven, 2008*). Collaborations are considered an important driver for learning and an alternative to internal knowledge generation within a company (*Becerra et al 2008*). In other words, researches define the collaboration as one of the most suitable form for sharing knowledge (*Becerra et al 2008*).

Thus, the growing interest concerning the impact of knowledge transfer on competitive advantage and the parallel with respect to the importance of knowledge flows as driver

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<sup>15</sup> <http://wenku.baidu.com/view/ddf750f8aef8941ea76e05f7.html>

of partnership formation and has drawn the attention of this research. To understand the relation between knowledge transfer and partnership performance, it will be analyzed throughout this chapter, the description of the elements composing the knowledge transfer with a focus on inter-organizational knowledge transfer, the barriers to overcome and the facilitators to implement leading to knowledge transfer performance.

## **5.1 Insights of the elements composing the knowledge transfer**

### ***5.1.1 From knowledge to knowledge transfer***

The word “knowledge” has had various amplitudes and theories of evolution along the time. First, knowledge refers to the state of knowing, so called “know about” meaning to be aware of something. Then, knowledge denotes “the capacity for action” or “know how” suggesting the comprehension of facts, methods, principles and techniques applied in the course of making things happen. Finally, the term “knowledge” or “body of knowledge” refers to the codification, the capture, and the accumulation of the facts, methods, principles and techniques (*Nickols 2000*).

Knowledge can be created, stored, transferred, exploited and the ability to success in these activities represent the essence of the firm (*Panjaitan, Noorderhaven, 2008*) and learning in collaboration implies the possibility to access and internalize critical information, capabilities and skills from a partner (*Bercerra et al, 2008*). Although knowledge transfer in organizations implies knowledge transfer amongst individuals, the issue still transcend the individual level to reach a more complex level of analysis such as the group, the department, the division and the organizational performance (*Argote, Ingram, 2000 ; Eisenhardt, Santos, 2001*).

Individuals produce knowledge and act according to it. Through their actions and experiences, perspectives change and individuals gain in ability to proceed differently in new situations (*Quinn et al. 1998*). Organizational knowledge transfer relates the



process in which the actors of an organization exchange, receive and influence the experiences and knowledge of other members (*Van Wijk et al, 2008*).

### ***5.1.2 Knowledge transfer: types of knowledge, transfer mechanisms and codification of knowledge***

Knowledge is acquired through learning. It occurs when existing knowledge is emanated during a new situation or context (*Eraut, 2000*). Knowledge transfer is a complex notion. Among the most important characteristics, the knowledge management literature highlight: the types of knowledge, the mechanisms of the transfer and the codification of knowledge. Tacit and explicit knowledge are the two types of knowledge (*Nonaka, 1995; Eisenhardt, Santos, 2001; Despres, Chauvel, 2002; Jiang, Li, 2009*). Formal and informal are the mechanisms by which the codified knowledge is acquired, known as learning process (*Eraut, 2000*), or learning behavior (*Panjaitan, Noorderhaven, 2008*). Knowledge codification means converting tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge in a usable form to make easier the transfer and accessibility of knowledge from the sender to the recipient, that can be individuals, groups, organizations or network (*Mitton et al, 2007*).

Other elements are determinant when addressing the issue of knowledge transfer such as its complexity, ambiguity, and specificity (*Zander and Kogut, 1995; Simonin, 2004*). These aspects are relevant to analyze, when dealing with inter-organizational knowledge, and so will be tackled afterwards.

For the organizational members the codification of knowledge is essential to make institutional knowledge visible, accessible, and usable for decision-making (*Mitton et al, 2007*). Knowledge can be codified into different kinds of support such as manuals, diagrams (*Cumming, Teng, 2003*), but also contracts, documents, review procedures or decision support system (*Easterby-Smith et al, 2008*).

The two notions, explicit and tacit, are as similar as different. Explicit knowledge can be codified and embedded in artifacts, processes, and written down or taught. It is a standardized procedure. While tacit knowledge is detained in the individual mind and

deeply rooted into actions and experiences, unable to be codified and mainly experiential. It is a non-standardized procedure (*Eisenhardt and Santos, 2001*). In other words, explicit knowledge is conveyed to others through dialogs, demonstrations, or medias such as books, drawings, and documents, whereas tacit knowledge is deeply incorporated into personal experiences, aptitudes, perceptions, insights, and know-how that are implied or indicated but not actually expressed (*Dhanaraj et al, 2004*). Despres and Chauvel (2002) and Van Wijk et al (2008) argue that knowledge is not a simple stable quantity and the importance to understand and deal efficiently with the individuals' knowledge is a guarantee to value creation and/or competitive advantage. Eisenhardt and Santos (2001) confirm the particular importance to understand knowledge type's distinction arguing on the difficulty to articulate tacit knowledge, only transferable and learnable through observation and action. On the contrast, explicit knowledge, especially incorporated into technology, appears to be easier to be transferred and moved within and amongst organizations (*Argote, Ingram, 2000*). Nevertheless, tacit knowledge, reaches an important consensus amongst scholars regarding its strategic purpose. Indeed tacit knowledge is considered a crucial resource for the organization and its competitive advantage, due to its difficulty to be imitated or moved (*Grant, 1996; Eisenhardt and Santos, 2001; Becker, Knudsen 2006*).

The transfer mechanisms refer to the learning context in which the transfer takes place. Formal learning regards organized and structured learning context in which learning is intentional such as trainings (*Panjaitan, Noorderhaven, 2008*), meetings, education sessions, communities of practice, organizational platforms (*Mitton et al, 2007*), document exchanges, site visits, joint teams (*Cumming et al, 2003*). Informal learning is usually perceived as a residual category characterized by the non-presence, during or after the learning situation, by a formally organized learning program or event (*Erault, 2000*). It is a non-structured context where the learning approach is not intentional, and characterized by a better flexibility or freedom from the learners (*Colardyn, Bjornavold, 2004*). It can however appear in a variety of places, such as at home, work, and through daily interactions and shared relationships between members of society (*Erault, 2004*). Formal learning is an easier mechanism to codify and transfer knowledge, and informal learning to be an easier mechanism to alleviate cultural differences and manage distant locations (*Easterby-Smith et al, 2008*).

Researches on knowledge transfer convey the idea of a positive correlation between knowledge transfer and organizational outcome such as the level of performance, innovativeness and organizational capabilities (*Van Wijk et al 2008*). Okkonen (2005) illustrates that tacit and formal knowledge are the most important aspects of knowledge to be transferred. Indeed, explicit and informal are quite common knowledge, while implicit and informal could have been the most important but are still the most incomprehensible.

### ***5.1.3 Knowledge transfer: a source of organizational performance***

Knowledge and the generation of knowledge are playing important roles in a firm's competitive advantage and economic performance (*Grant, 1996; Spender, 1996*). The impact that strategic collaborations might have on firm-level performance has consequently attracted research interest. In fact, the ability of an organization to make knowledge available from an organization to another has not only proved to increase organizational effectiveness but also to be a crux of the matter to the survival and success of organizations (*Matthews, Shulman, 2001*).

The literature review on knowledge transfer generally takes the view arguing that achievement of sustaining competitive advantages is the primer goal of collaborations (*Eisenhardt and Santos 2002*). Successful collaborations are therefore supposed to improve performance for partner firms and their customers, especially those partnerships that involve the transfer or pooling of technologies and knowledge. Organizational competitive advantage is maintained when the resources developed within the organization are difficult to imitate by competitors.

To introduce the topic on inter-organizational knowledge transfer, a concise overview of the evidences on organizational performance emerging from the literature is required.

The focus on organizational performance is a growing agreement on what the organization comes to know that explains its performance (*Argote, Ingram, 2000*). Measuring knowledge transfer's performance may be done by determining the changes

in the performance itself (*Levine, Prietula, 2006*). Knowledge transfer identifies two distinct dimensions. First, knowledge transfer performance corresponds to those activities that enhanced organization's stock of knowledge, so called knowledge generation. Secondly, knowledge transfer performance is intended as the deployment of existing knowledge to create value, nominated knowledge application. The distinction between the two concepts is essential when dealing with collaborations. Knowledge generation is the instrument through which member's firm use the collaboration to transfer and absorb the partner's knowledge. Knowledge application is a form of knowledge shared in which each member of firm accesses its partner's stock of knowledge in order to exploit complementarities, but with the intention of maintaining its distinctive bases of specialized knowledge (*Grant, Fuller, 2004*).

Argote and Ingram' study (2000), demonstrates how knowledge reservoirs can be combined with behavioral evidence on knowledge transfer and present evidences indicating how organizations can develop the knowledge that is a basis for competitive advantage. They argue that moving people as a knowledge transfer mechanism is a source of organizational performance because people are able to transfer either tacit or explicit knowledge. Moreover, as organizations acquire knowledge, they also learn which tasks are best performed by people and those that are best performed by tools. Related to organizational performance, it has been previously expressed that the correlation between knowledge transfer's success and the level of absorptive capacity are linked up. In addition, the authors demonstrate the association between absorptive capacity and business performance. Absorptive capacity involves the ability to assimilate new external knowledge and to apply it to commercial end leading to the opportunity for profit. Thus, increasing organizational knowledge should enhance business performance (*Argote, Ingram, 2000*).

Although, knowledge transfer in cross sector partnership seems to express positive judgments and evolution has forecast, its impact on performance is still difficult to measure. For instance, Gardner et al (2010) put in evidence some factors of performance considered tough to measure. For instance inputs and outputs estimation permit to measure the change in the level of organizational stock. The first indicates the stock of resources and activities done while the second shows the results achieved. In terms of social project's development, quantifying results means to tackle performance

in term of quality more than quantity. This performance measurement is establishing the problem of the lack of performance qualitative instruments. However academic literature on the topic stresses the importance of knowledge transfer amongst organizations as a critical element allowing to gain in competitive advantage (*Comacchio, Bonesso, 2012*).

## **5.2 Cross-sector collaborations: the relevance of inter-organizational knowledge transfer**

### ***5.2.1 Distinction between inter and intra knowledge transfer***

Knowledge is created within organizations or accessed externally, so called respectively intra-organizational and inter-organizational levels. Indeed, if the knowledge transfers takes place in the market, inter-organization knowledge transfer is examined, whereas if the knowledge is shared in a hierarchy, intra-organization knowledge transfer is the focus (*Becker, Knudsen, 2006*).

Although there are interactions between inter and intra organizational knowledge transfer, boundaries to overpass it are different. The transfer between organizations seems more complex than within the organization, due to many divergent aspects such as the nature, the cultures and the processes involved of the two organizations (*Smith et al, 2008*).

The study focuses on knowledge transfer in cross sector collaborations, specifically between corporations and nonprofit organizations. By definition, inter-organizational knowledge transfer involves at least two organizations (*Smith et al, 2008*), so knowledge transfer in cross-sector collaboration forms part of inter-organization knowledge transfer.

Inter-firm knowledge usually occurs in a context of partnership, collaboration and strategic alliance that are any inter-firm cooperation going from the discrete to the complete merger form (*Contractor, Lorange in 2002*). According to Borys and Jemison (1989), one or more organizations form a partnership to cooperate in order to achieve

strategic objectives and create a common value. Indeed concerning knowledge-based theory, alliance formation is a driver for organizational learning in which partners of the alliance are motivated by the desire to acquire knowledge from each other (*Grant, Fuller, 2004*). However, learning from the collaboration experience and the partner skills respectively imply internal and external obstacles in which knowledge exchange and acquisition can be affected (*Becker, Knudsen, 2006*).

### ***5.2.2 Inter-organizational knowledge transfer: a complex process***

According to Nonaka, pioneer on the issue, knowledge is created thanks to individuals and the organizational context that aims at supporting this creation. The knowledge created is afterwards part of the network of the structure (*Nonaka, 1994*). Subsequently O'Dell and Grayson (1998) identify six steps in the knowledge transfer cycle, crucial to absorb the knowledge created: identification, collection, organization, share, transfer, and adaptation. The process of knowledge sharing is by consequent dynamic. Mitton (2007) sustains this theory defining the knowledge transfer and exchange as an interactive process of knowledge interchange.

Knowledge transfer is a key aspect for organizations competitive advantage. This part consists in the comprehension of the inter-organizational knowledge transfer process, between the donor firm and the recipient firm, analyzing at the same time, the attributes of knowledge and the process it (*Grant, 1996*).

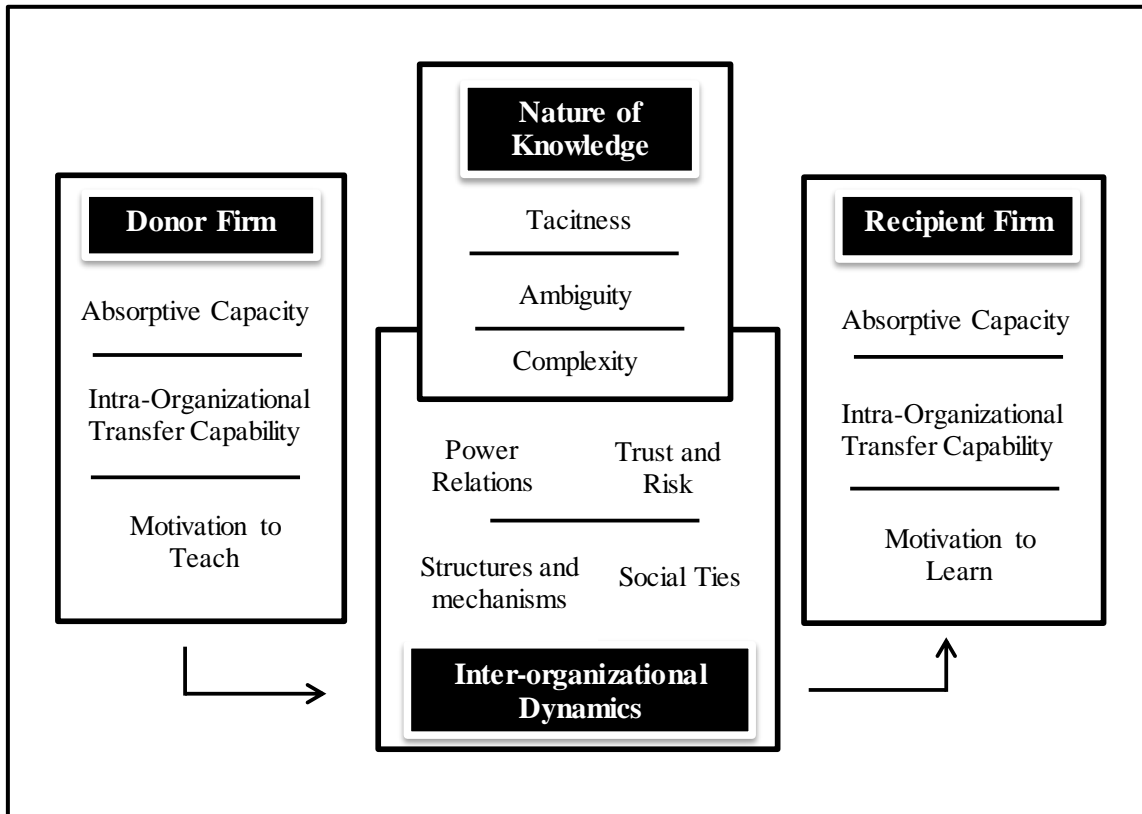
Network, structure and mechanisms of organizational knowledge transfer are frequent issues but few scholars have evidenced the sequence of the overall factors influencing inter-organizational knowledge transfer process (*Reagans, McEvily, 2003*).

Consequently, the study led by Easterby-Smith et al (2008), is a complete and recent article adequate to understand the relation between all the factors intervening from the donor to the recipient organization.

The framework observed in the following figure, is based on a dyadic case of knowledge transfer, meaning the sharing and transferring of knowledge between a sender and a receiver through a social structure. Four complementary elements are analyzed: the characteristics of the donor firm ; the characteristics of the recipient firm;

the nature of the knowledge shared among the two organizations; and the inter-organizational dynamicity categorizing the relationship.

Figure 8. Elements composing the inter-organization knowledge transfer



Source: Easterby-Smith et al (2008)

The first category of component to analyze is the donor firm and by reciprocity and connection, the recipient firm. The factors that affect the donor and recipient firms are the absorptive capacity, the intra-organizational transfer capability and the motivation to teach or to learn. According to Easterby-Smith et al (2008), the process is the following: knowledge transfer is a dyadic relationship between donor and recipient that can exchange knowledge reciprocally between each other. The donor should be able to correctly teach, in order to permit the perfect absorption and adaptation of the new knowledge into the receiver, which should in return use its intra-organizational

knowledge transfer to diffuse the knowledge within its structure. The key element is the level of absorptive capacity characterizing the recipient firm.

Prevot (2007), in its working paper on inter-firm knowledge transfer methods, used the term “reservoir of knowledge” to describe the displacement of knowledge between the source and the recipient. Reservoirs of knowledge can take three different forms: the members of the organizations, the tasks undertaken, and the tools and technologies used (Aragot and Ingram, 2000). The transfer and absorption of the knowledge is a complex process, highly depending on the interaction of the two ‘reservoirs’ and their compatibility to share.

The knowledge transfer is positively correlated with the use of the three reservoirs to facilitate its transfer and absorption (Prevot, 2007).

Absorptive capacity and the associative learning stress to greatly influence the transfer of knowledge (Simonin, 1994, Reagan, McEvily, 2003). Absorptive capacity refers to the ability to recognize, assimilate and apply the new external knowledge received (Van Wijk et al, 2008). The two reservoirs are involved in the process and their level of absorptive capacity impacts, influences and facilitates the inter-organizational knowledge transfer. The point is the degree of ability to exploit, integrate and replace resources by new ones (Littlewood, 2009). Absorptive capacity plays a crucial role in increasing intra-and inter-organizational knowledge transfer (Mowery et al, 1996). Absorptive capacity and intra-organizational transfer ability are linked in the sense that a high level of knowledge absorption is usually accompanied by a high level of organizational diffusion.

The source must be able to make understandable its knowledge and the recipient to add what he learned to its already existing knowledge. The transfer of knowledge in the organizational context will occur depending on the individuals’ willingness to share



their experiences and insights with others (*Littlewood, 2009*)<sup>16</sup>. This aspect is called the motivational factor. For Reagan and McEvily (2003), motivation to teach and learn is related to the strength of interpersonal connection.

Communication frequency and emotional attachment are positive factors increasing the willingness to share knowledge, and affect the motivation to provide assistance and support (*Reagan, McEvily, 2003*).

However, even if motivation is high, the knowledge transfer across organization boundaries can be subject to misunderstandings or variation in the interpretations, restraining the absorption of the knowledge (*Reagan, McEvily, 2003*). By consequence, intra-organizational transfer is related to the ability of the two reservoirs to internalize the knowledge (*Berthon, 2001*). Thereby, review on intra-organizational knowledge transfer evidences several models to guarantee the good transfer of knowledge. The work of Szulanski (1996), is based on a dyadic relation. It suggests a process divided in five phases. The more each phase is developed, the more the capability to adapt the knowledge into the organization is successful. “Initialization” phase indicates the beginning of the knowledge transfer at the time where the organization recognized its need. Another phase is the analyze of the “compatibility of the transfer” in order to be able to collect and receive the information. Afterwards, the “adaptation of the knowledge” into the recipient is following and the motivation to teach and support is crucial in this step. Subsequently, the “setting up of the knowledge” permits the perfect adaptation. This phase begins when the recipient uses the knowledge and should resolve the troubles occurring that impeded to surpass the adaptation. Finally, “the appropriation of the knowledge”, results in the institutionalization of the latter, being integrally part of the new structure. Thus, the capability of the reservoirs to understand and adapt themselves to each other, according to their intra-organizational knowledge characteristics is determinant (*Szulanski, 1996*).

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.ukessays.com/dissertations/management/achieving-a-successful-knowledge-transfer-in-strategic-alliances.php>

Thus, for the donor and the recipient, involved in a dyadic relationship, their ability to adapt and institutionalize knowledge depends on their mutual motivation to teach, learn, and support. Moreover the ability of their organizational structure to internalize, and their personal capacity to absorb and assimilate the new knowledge are two determinant factors characterizing the inter-organizational knowledge transfer (*Easterby-Smith et al 2008*).

Dealing with inter-organizational transfer process induces a minimum of two organizations. It is relevant to analyze the dynamicity of the transfer affecting the knowledge transfer of the structures involved. The framework exposed in the figure by Easterby-Smith et al (2008) puts in evidence four broad factors characterizing the dynamicity of the knowledge in an inter-organizational framework: power relations; trust and risk; structures and mechanisms; and social ties.

The structures concern the form adopted by the two organizations, the place where they collaborate and the context in which they transfer their knowledge. Mechanisms are setting up within the context and represent the way organizations used to communicate (*Easterby-Smith et al 2008*).

Reagans, McEvily (2003), establish a direct linked amongst the structures, the mechanisms and the performance of the Knowledge transfer. Formal structure and coordination of the organizational context, positively affect the transfer of knowledge. Furthermore, the more the mechanisms are supporting both the formal and informal structures amongst the organizations and their members, the more suitable the types of knowledge transfer are going to be transferred (*Szulanski, 1996*). A variety of mechanisms facilitates the knowledge transfer. For instance the transparency of the mechanisms amongst the members, or the formal global structure that establish rules, programs and procedures, result to positively influence the cooperation and exchange of knowledge (*Wen, Yu, 2007*).

Distribution of power and power asymmetry between the donor and the recipient is influenced by the structures and mechanisms. Usually, the donor is superior in terms of power than the recipient (*Easterby-Smith et al 2008*). According to Evans (1998), the

power impacts on knowledge transfer within and between organizations. Indeed, even if collaboration is perceived as an organizational interdependence in terms of control and power, the two parties tend to pursue personal or sectorial interests.

Power dynamics suggest that the recipient better acquires formal knowledge (*Evans, 1998*).

Trust impacts on the credibility, and the latter influences the power relation and perception (*Easterby-Smith et al 2008*). Trust is the perception of trustworthiness amongst individuals or organizations. *Zaheer et al (2013)* define inter-organizational trust as the extent to which boundary-spanning agent trust each other. It represents the level of trust placed in the partner. *Zaheer and other scholars* evidence the real importance of trust, as a crucial variable for knowledge transfer.

For the purpose of the framework suggested, trust and risk are correlated. *Easterby-Smith et al (2008)* elaborate theories with respect to the mutual risks faced by the donor and the recipient. The donor faces the possibility to lose its competitive advantage whereas the recipient takes the risk to experience a useless knowledge transfer. Thus, credibility is an important factor to guarantee trust, which in return, improves inter-organizational knowledge transfer.

High trust increases the willingness to take risks, reducing conflicts, and improving communication and relations, and by consequence the cooperation (*Becerra et al, 2008*).

Trust and social ties are also specially interconnected. The more the social ties are strong between individuals, the better the knowledge shared is facilitated and the trust developed. Strength of social ties and level of trust between the two reservoirs positively influence the knowledge transfer (*Cumming, Teng, 2003*). The framework of *Easterby-Smith et al (2008)*, explains social ties strength between individuals as a strong driver for knowledge transfer. Social ties are important within and between organizations but the most fundamental importance is the impact on spatial distance between the two organizations. Social ties permit to alleviate cultural differences that can exist between the two structures.

To go further into the inter-organization dynamics analysis, Levin and Cross (2004) hypothesize the link between strong ties and knowledge reception. Benevolence and competence help the relation to be tied.

Social ties influence trust and lead to a better knowledge transfer. Strong ties actually promote the transfer of complex knowledge while weak ties just encourage the transfer of simple knowledge (*Reagans, McEvily, 2003*). Defensive behaviors block the learning, while benevolences increase the learning benefits and is likely to occur in the presence of strong ties. Competences affect the perception of knowledge usefulness. Trust in competences, passing through good advice, complementary expertise and mutual understandings improve the tie between individuals, and impact on the knowledge transfer performance (*Levin, Cross, 2004*).

The four factors of inter-organizational dynamics are linked and influenced each other. Structures influence social ties, that affect trust which is likely to impact on knowledge transfer outcome (*Reagans, McEvily, 2003*). The last category of elements influencing inter-organizational knowledge transfer is the nature of the knowledge transferred between the donor and the recipient. The nature of the knowledge represents the degree of tacit, ambiguity and complexity of the knowledge transferred. Indeed, the knowledge itself is composed by various elements facilitating or complicating the process. For instance, Eisenhardt and Santos' study (2001) put in evidence three factors impeding the knowledge transfer: the tacit, the causal ambiguity and the complexity of the knowledge. Simonin (2004) agrees with this statement and puts forward a complete framework on the inter-connection of these three elements.

Complexity and tacit knowledge are antecedents of ambiguity. Ambiguity represents a lack of understanding of the logical linkages between the cause and effect. Tacit is characterized by its implicit and non-codified knowledge traducing by "learning by doing". In addition, complexity involves the number of independent technologies, routines, individuals and resources linked to a particular knowledge.

The results of the study highlight that tacit is positively correlated with ambiguity, complexity increases ambiguity and ambiguity is negatively correlated with knowledge transfer. Argote and Ingram (2000), reinforce the observation arguing that the ambiguity of knowledge corresponds to the level of the recipient non-understanding of the

difficulty of transfer throughout all the phases. Similarly, they also evidence that the more the technology is complex, the more the transfer is difficult to understand. Szulanski (1996) and Simonin (2004) focus on the relation between tacit knowledge and ambiguity, and find a positive correlation amongst the two elements. They both conclude that ambiguity is an important barrier to knowledge transfer.

Thus, if the ambiguity is linked to the competences of the partner, the chance to absorb them is reduced and the knowledge transfer becomes difficult. Therefore, the degree of tacit of the capability, affects the level of ambiguity and complexity, that affect the overall degree of comprehension (*Simonin, 2004*).

The overall factors making up the inter-organizational knowledge transfer transcend their categories. According to Eisenhardt and Santos (2001), not only these factors are interconnected among each other but they also influence the knowledge itself. For instance, they assume that strong ties can resolve the transfer of complex knowledge as well as the relationship between the sender and the recipient. Reagans and McEvily (2003) presume that a high degree of tacit requires a high effort to convey knowledge, and the tacit knowledge needs strong ties to be transferred. In addition, a high level of absorptive capacity from the recipient reduces the complexity of the knowledge transfer, but the tacit part of the nature of the knowledge increases its ambiguity that decreases the level of trust (*Becerra et al, 2008*).

### **5.3 The main barriers to overcome and the key facilitators to implement to make knowledge transfer a source of competitive advantage**

Barriers and facilitators are important issues addressed by scholars when dealing with best practices. The elements previously analyzed regarded the complexity of the knowledge itself and the inter-organizational knowledge fit the purpose of the subtlety of the topic, but further obstacles can be discussed. These factors concern the individual and the organization matter, and their impact on the knowledge transfer performance (*Mitton et al, 2007*). Inter-sectorial knowledge transfer, across different organizations, addresses specific barriers and pays out more difficulties than intra-knowledge transfer.

Indeed, the overall differences existing between organizations from distinct sectors are higher (*Tsang 2005; Van Wijk et al 2008*). In order to successfully perform the transfer of knowledge and to achieve competitive advantage, barriers need to be understood and reduced. The ambiguity of knowledge, its tacit nature, the level of trust or the lack of motivation to share is current obstacles hampering the success of the transfer (*Becker, Knudsen, 2006*). Because knowledge transfer can lead to competitive advantage, determining which factors to promote or to impede the transfer of knowledge constitute an important area of research (*Van den Hoff, Hendrix, 2004*).

### ***5.3.1 Barriers and facilitators of Knowledge transfer***

A large body of research focuses on knowledge acquisition, integration, exploitation within the collaboration (*Grant 1996, ; Mowery et al. 1996; Steensma et al. 2007*), and on the induced challenges of the knowledge transfer itself within and amongst organizations (*Hamel 1991 ; Zander, Kogut 1995 ; Argote et al. 2000 ; Van Wijk et al. 2008*).

Dealing with inter firms knowledge transfer barriers nearly lead back to the study of the obstacles emerging from the different factors influencing the knowledge exchange, such as the ones analyzed previously in the figure of Easterby-Smith et al (2008). The precedent determinants were: the donor and the recipient firms characteristics (absorptive capacity, intra-organizational transfer capability, and the motivation) ; the nature of knowledge (tacit nature, ambiguity and complexity) ; and the dynamics of the knowledge transfer (power, the level of trust and risk, the structure and mechanisms and the social ties). Almost every elements impacting on the inter-firm knowledge transfer have been a focus of study with regard to the analysis of the barriers (*Hamel 1991; Zander, Kogut 1995; Evans 1998; Argote et al. 2000; Szulanski 2003; Dhanaraj et al. 2004 ; Van Wijk et al. 2008 ; Becerra et al. 2008 ; Zaheer et al. 2013*).

The problem of internal stickiness put in evidence in the Szulanski's study (1997, 2003) is represented in the literature as the main characteristic of the knowledge transfer

impediment. Internal stickiness is defined by the difficulty linked to the complexity to recreate and integrate a new knowledge. Evidently, facing problems of integration are an important barrier to the successful transfer. The study of Szulanski (2003) is a concrete illustration of the main barriers related to inter organizational knowledge transfer, and is coherent with the demonstration used previously to analyze inter-organizational factors. Indeed, stickiness of the knowledge impacts on several variables examined within the precedent framework. It confirms the interconnection of the elements and the dynamicity of the knowledge exchange.

The causal ambiguity of the knowledge, characterized by the uncertainty of the knowledge replication, accentuated by the indefinable portion of tacit knowledge embodied in tacit human skills is the first element of stickiness (*Becerra et al. 2008*). Secondly, the reluctance of the source to share, or the recipient to accept knowledge from outside, are elements often linked to the level of power and risk. Reluctance mainly appears due to the perception of not being rewarded for sharing, the unwillingness to devote time to support the transfer, or from an outright rejection in the implementation and use of knowledge.

The sentiment of trustworthiness of the source creates difficulty and resistance from the recipient against the source and vice versa.

Then, the ability of a recipient to not being able to institutionalize the new knowledge, traducing a lack of absorptive capacity, generates difficulties for the integration process. This problem is difficult to overpass because it is primarily due to the preexisting stock of knowledge of the recipient (*Szulanski, 2003*).

Barriers connected to mechanisms and structures are present when the organizational context is not favorable for transfer, so called a barren organizational context, whereas a favorable structure is fertile. Informal network reveal to be an impediment of knowledge (*Allen et al. 2007*), while formal structure and systems, as well as face-to-face mechanisms help to overpass the barren structure.

Finally, low social ties create problems of communication and misunderstandings (*Szulanski, 2003*).

On the other hand, other kinds of barrier's classification can explain the knowledge transfer difficulties. Although different from the stickiness causes and consequences, a lot of similarities can be observed within the intrinsic characteristics of the inter

organizational knowledge transfer. For instance, Barson et al (2000) focus their research on both the inter and intra organizational barriers, adopting a classification revolved around four main categories: the cross category barriers; the technology barriers; the organizational barriers; and the people barriers.

Cross category barriers are a challenge to knowledge transfer when resources (such as money, technology, data transfer, skill or time) are not sufficient to guarantee the transfer, when sharing is not leading to reward, or when a company's culture is not able to correctly support the sharing.

Technological barriers such as the non-availability of the technology to codify the new knowledge, the lack of legacy system, are constraints to the absorption, integration and management of the knowledge (*Barson et al. 2000*).

Then, three sub categories compose the organizational barriers. The raise of internal cost due to the collaboration management, the differences in terms of styles, priorities or motivations ; the risk of sharing knowledge and lose its competitive advantage, leading to organizational resistance; and the physical distance impeding the communication between organizations and limiting the social ties (*Allen et al. 2007*). In fact, studies on geographical boundaries are analyzed as being a determinant barrier for knowledge (*Cross, Parker, 2004*).

Finally, people barriers form important factors to manage in collaboration. This category gathers the resistance from the company, individuals or partners; the problems of power and self-interest; the lack of trust ; the risk of sharing especially where proprietary risk is being shared ; the fear of exploitation of the knowledge without return ; and the fear of the contamination of the brand mark for instance.

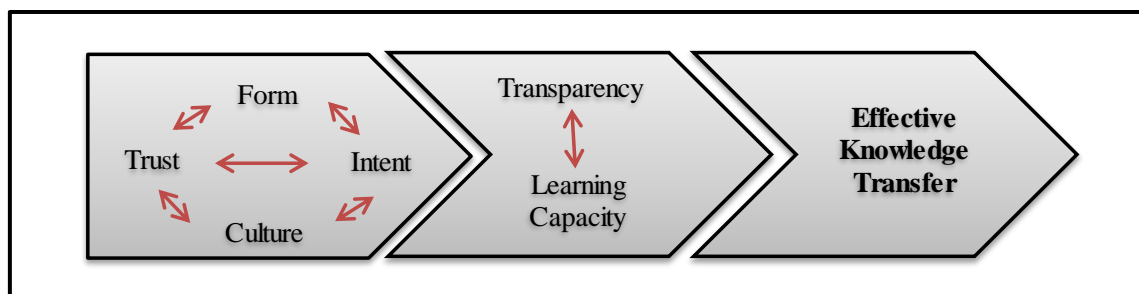
Thus, knowledge transfer barriers, from the organizations, the individuals or the knowledge itself, are well-recognized themes. The study of the elements facilitating the knowledge transfer is by consequence inevitable (*Milton et al. 2007*). For instance, academic articles suggest various possibilities to overpass the barriers. Nieminen, (2005) suggests three determinants focuses, emphasized as basic elements for effective learning through relationships: mutual intent (motivation), transparency (possibility) and receptivity (ability). Nonaka (1994) highlights face-to-face exchange as a positive instrument of management reducing the issues linked to geographical distance. Panjaitan and Noorderhaven (2008) promote the establishment of formal mechanism to



facilitate the knowledge transfer. A climate of trust between the organizations is the focus of a large part of the literature and qualified to be a central element for knowledge transfer success (*Becerra et al. 2008; Levin, Cross 2004; Zaheer et al. 2013*).

The Despres and Chauvel's study (2002) puts forward a model of four conditions to knowledge transfer success. Four conditions to guarantee the knowledge transfer effectiveness compose the model, answering at the same time the diverse challenges mentioned previously. Strategic intent, culture, trust and form, are conditions for effective learning within a partnership. Together with the four conditions, there are two independent variables guaranteeing the achievement of the strategic outcome: the transparency and the learning capacity. The figure below illustrates the model of effective knowledge transfer through the interaction amongst the four conditions and the independent variables.

Figure 9. A model of knowledge transfer effectiveness



Source: Despres and Chauvel, (2002)

Strategic intent concerns the way a firm perceives its strategic collaboration with its partner. The authors denote three types of intent:

- The access: the need of knowledge is limited by the determination of the objectives and time.
- The internalization: the transfer processes in delimited boundaries.
- The integration: knowledge is needed to access a common strategic knowledge competence, activity or product. Integration intent is the best strategic way to guarantee knowledge transfer.

Organizational culture is defined from its inclination to remain stable contrary to the necessity to change and be flexible. The more an organization is open to the external environment and able to evaluate its needs, the more the transfer knowledge and its integration is effective. On the contrary, a ‘close’ organization tends to rely on its own resources. In fact, benefiting from a partner means being able to adapt to each other, in terms of routines, values, and objectives (*Despres, Chauvel, 2002*). Even if the importance to adapt to each other is determinant, the need to share social identity is even more important. Having organizational culture similarities facilitate affinity and trust. Sharing identity makes easier the definition of rules, norms and values of the partnership (*Nieminen, 2005*).

Throughout this research, trust is a determinant factor, particularly when dealing with tacit knowledge transfer. Higher level of trust leads to higher level of knowledge transfer (*Zaheer et al. 2013*). Authors identify three particular determinants of trust affecting the success of the knowledge transfer: the interdependency of the partners, their reputations and their prior experiences (*Despres, Chauvel, 2002*). Thus, trust is not inherent and not easy to establish naturally. Interdependency in terms of competences and resources provoke a reciprocal confidence. Partners having two similar reputations also reinforce their mutual intention of partnering, and prior experiences assessment allow them to make a right judgment.

Finally, the form is the illustration of the organizational design of the alliance, and the expression of the nature of knowledge exchange. According to this framework, the three types of forms are the following:

- Non-equity. Form designed to fulfill a contractual objective in a determined time limit.
- Joint venture. The creation of a joint entity between the two partners.
- Equity form. This form traduces a strong commitment amongst the parties without the creation of a common entity.

Authors argue that Joint venture is the form the most adequate to promote knowledge transfer (*Mowery, et al, 1996*). For instance, *Nieminen (2005)* argues that the more the organizational form is common to the two organizations, the more the creation of a shared environment will appear and reach extensive social linkages in the long run.

Suhk Pak and Ryeol Park (2004) study the knowledge transfer in cross border joint ventures. The main findings demonstrate that this form leads to a positive social interaction between partners and accentuates the transfer of tacit knowledge, source of competitive advantage.

These four conditions are essentials to promote mutual learning. Nonetheless, two independent variables guarantee the strategic outcome of the partnership: the transparency and the learning capacity.

According to the authors, transparency signifies the mutual “openness” of the partner, measured through the level of communication. It is essential for the companies to trust each other in order to develop transparency, open communication and close interaction (*Nieminen, 2005*). The nature of the knowledge and the willingness of the actors to share knowledge are linked to the degree of communication. Explicit knowledge can be easier to transfer, although tacit knowledge can be strategic. Willingness is enhanced through trust, and tacit knowledge is perceived as one of the outcome of knowledge transfer, bringing richness to the organization (*Becker, Knudsen, 2006*).

Learning capacity, or absorptive capacity, is stronger when the actors share similar cognitive bases, mental or cultural, and agree on structure. Significant prior experiences or education can be important factors not to be neglected (*Despres, Chauvel, 2002*).

Thus, these four conditions are the pillar of a successful knowledge transfer, and should lead to a structure promoting transparency and learning capacity, that will finally lead to an effective mutual learning.

The challenge is to develop abilities by transferring and integrating knowledge from external sources into the organization’s knowledge base. The relationship context is determinant for the success of the transfer, but the fear of opportunistic behavior is still recurrent and superior to trust (*Nieminen, 2005*). It is important to manage barriers upstream in order to avoid a cost exceeding the strategic success. Trust amongst individuals, structure supporting support, face to face exchange, interdependency of the partners, sufficient resources, clear rules, clear roles, quality of the relationship, inclusion of key individuals, personal contacts, mutual visits, geographic proximity, prior experiences, shared visions and all others elements regarding inter organizational characteristics have to be clearly studied and identified (*Miton et al. 2007*). The key lies

in trust. In order for the transfer of knowledge to be possible, companies may need to adjust to each other's activities and build mutual trust (transparency) and intents. The role of mutual trust and intent is important, as the transferred knowledge is highly related to the organizations' competitive advantage. Thus, the creation of a shared identity can be related to the tasks of relationship management (*Nieminen, 2005*).

Thus, findings on knowledge transfer confirm and highlight its impact on business performance. Firms with greater knowledge transfer have greater business performance. However, the difficulty to measure it and be able to transfer it within the firm is still critical obstacles. This result is due to the fact that each kind of knowledge has a very different kind of user within the firm. The results show the importance of the capacity for assimilating the knowledge in the relation between knowledge transfer and business performance (*Fernandes et al, 2006*).

**6. The case studies of Coopi-Guna and Gret-Danone:  
presentation of the partners, the projects realized, and the  
interviews conducted**



This chapter is dedicated to the presentation of the two case studies, and the results of the interview.

The first part presents the general outline of the two partnerships selected, Coopi-Guna and Gret-Danone, respectively the Italian nonprofit and profit organizations and the French ones. Since we are analyzing inter sectorial relations, organizational dynamics and national characteristics, it is important to make a description of the partners and their projects. This outline permits to observe the presence of the pre-defined criteria developed within the research strategy and methodology part, to select the partnerships. The second part will present the results of the interview, done with the Coopi-Guna and Gret-Danone, based on to the structure of the questionnaire

## 6.1 Presentation of the two partnerships: the case studies Coopi-Guna and Gret-Danone

### 6.1.1 The Italian case study: ‘Medicina Interculturale in Paraguay’<sup>17</sup>, a successful partnership accomplished by Coopi and Guna

*Outline of Coopi: ‘miglioriamo il mondo, insieme’.*<sup>18</sup>

Table 4. Presentation of Coopi

Denomination	COOPI – Cooperazione Internazionale Onlus <sup>19</sup>
Identity	Coopi is a humanitarian organization, non-confessional and independent. The Institution, recognized eligible as Non-Governmental Organization is a non-profit organization by rights.

<sup>17</sup> Intercultural medicine in Paraguay

<sup>18</sup> Together we can make the world a better place

<sup>19</sup> International Cooperation

<b>Creation</b>	Vincenzo Barbieri (Italian father of international volunteering) founded Coopi in 1965. The NGO aims at assisting populations in emergencies affected by disasters and conflicts, and at facilitating their civil, economic and social development. COOPI is known as the “We do it NGO”.
<b>Sectors of activity</b>	Emergency, agriculture, water and sanitation, health care, humanitarian assistance, human rights, education, socio-economic services, migration, child sponsorship programs.
<b>Vision</b>	Coopi aspires after a world without poverty, able to realize ideals of equality and fairness, of sustainability and social cohesion, thanks to the meeting and the collaboration among all populations.
<b>Mission</b>	Through commitment, involvement, determination and professionalism of the Coopi’s staff, the organization wants to contribute to fight against poverty and growth of the communities, in order to reduce the unbalance between the North and the South of the world.
<b>International Presence</b>	Coopi is present in 23 countries in Africa, Latin America and Middle East. In 2012, Coopi has realized 176 projects, reaching more than 3,6 millions of beneficiaries and managed 29 programs of children sponsorship in 8 countries, helping 2,692 children.
<b>Staff</b>	In Italy, there are 47 consultants, 32 employees and 350 volunteers. Abroad, there are 121 expatriates and 4500 local staff.
<b>Budget</b>	In 2012, Coopi managed to gather about 48 million euro. 94% of these funds have been employed to realize field projects and 6% were allocated to administrative costs.
<b>Headquarters</b>	Coopi is based in Milan, Italy, and has 24 headquarters in the South of the World.

Source: Web site of Coopi <sup>20</sup>

*Coopi and corporations: the goal, sharing values*

Coopi's corporate goal is to create real strategic partnerships. The objective is to construct a collaboration going forward simple philanthropy, leading to the creation of real added value toward the community and providing mutual benefices.

Coopi uses the term 'strategic alliance' to stress the idea that collaborations go beyond the traditional approach on ecompanies-nonprofit organizational relations, reduced to punctual and short donations in which it is emphasized the role of the company versus the one of the NGO. Contrary to popular opinion, recent studies show the increasing numbers of long-term collaborations leading to real added value, substantial returns on investments and mutual benefits achieved.

Strategic alliance, cultural contamination, equity, transparency, respect, core business coherence are the elements that Coopi considers as essential to give value to the collaboration. Sharing values to create newly shared ones is the objective of Coopi Corporate; fusion of culture and professionalism to generate economic development and social progress.

*Coopi and corporations: guidelines, the basis for good partnerships*

The guidelines have been elaborated with the purpose to orientate the Coopi's partnerships actions and to provide useful references to develop adequate policies and strategies of CSR. Guidelines are composed of a succession of advices to orientate Coopi's staff in charge of looking after these alliances and accompany their evolutions. Guidelines also express special Coopi's requirements on partnerships. About the research and the associated case studies, it is important to present the partners' exclusion criteria and the conditions to conclude a partnership with Coopi, because this procedure is an important part of the partnership creation.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.coopi.org/en/aboutus/ourorganization/>



The criteria of exclusion are concerning organizations from special sectors or that are conducting activities considering a direct expulsion for Coopi.

For instance, Coopi does not consider eligible as partners, organizations that produce or sell weapons, hard liquor and tobacco, that employ illegal juvenile labor, violate human rights, fraud, or that are engaged in environmental violation or pollution. Additionally, the guidelines include the partners considered risky, such as organizations that have been previously involved in ones of the exclusion criteria, being part of a branch or sector that can be risky such as gas or petrol, having an economic support equal or superior than 100 000 euros or being the focus of media attention. For any partnerships considered risky, Coopi can present the case to the *Comitato Valutazione Corporate Relationship*<sup>21</sup> (CVCR) that will conduct the evaluation on the partnership possibility.

Once the organizations have passed these conditions, Coopi conducts another evaluation in which they inspect elements such as the CSR, ethics code, sustainability report and employee's human rights. The last step concerns the consideration of the fit between partner's mission and values and the Coopi's ones. While the Coopi's mission has been described in the outline, its values are solidarity, transparency, neutrality, participation, sustainability, knowledge transfer, innovation, respect for the diversity and valorization of the human resources. The presence of the knowledge transfer as a value for Coopi is a significant point reinforcing the idea that the research wants to demonstrate.

Knowledge transfer for Coopi means the contribution from the partner to share competencies in such a way that the beneficiaries of the intervention should be able to work in a complete autonomy and independently, giving the opportunity of a real social business between the partners and the beneficiaries of the Coopi's project.

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<sup>21</sup> Corporate Relationship Evaluation Committee

Table 5. Instruments of cooperation of Coopi

Areas	Categories of partnerships
<p>Marketing area</p> <p><b>The objectives of the area are to communicate and valorize the brand, as well as to answer stakeholders' requests.</b></p>	<p><u>Support a project</u>: co-donor partner to one of the Coopi's projects. It is a practical instrument of social responsibility. The company through this instrument can concretize its CSR strategy by intervening in a project in conformity with its core business and CSR objectives. Afterwards the two institutions can realize common actions.</p> <p><u>Participation to a campaign</u>: participate to a campaign of awareness and fund-raising, in order to associate your brand to the social cause. This category contributes to advocacy activity and public awareness on mutual interest topics.</p> <p><u>Event sponsorship</u>: support an event of Coopi with a free donation to cover the costs or build an initiative together.</p> <p><u>Cause related marketing</u>: the company associates a proper product or service to a Coopi's campaign. A percent of the sales related to this product/service aims at sustaining projects. It provides visibility and added value to your brand, combining high social cause and brand awareness. Customers feel involved in the social cause.</p> <p><u>Goods and services</u>: the company becomes a technical partner by donating goods and services useful for Coopi in Italy or abroad.</p>

Human resources  
area

**The objectives of  
the area are to  
motivate, create  
loyalty and train  
the proper staff,  
to attract new  
talents.**

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Staff involvement: involve the corporate staff members within responsible activities offering new stimuli and motivations.

Payroll giving: invite staff to spend one hour of their salary in favor of a social project.

Matching giving: promote a humanitarian project, involving your staff in the donation, contributing with an equal or superior donation.

Corporate volunteer day: encourage your staff to put their skills for Coopi through the creation of days of awareness in the company and on the territory.

International corporate volunteer: involve your staff directly in international Coopi's projects.

Diversity Lab: design multicultural laboratory, made of team building and social purpose formation. Train your manager to valorize diversities with an ethic and responsible approach.

Skill sharing: do a professional exchange in Italy or abroad. The company becomes actor of the cooperation. The company can contribute through its know-how or technologic support on field project.

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Risk  
Management area

**The objectives of  
the area are to  
prevent and  
manage  
enterprise risk  
throughout the  
supply chain**

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Common project on the field: Study together an intervention in South countries where the company (directly or indirectly) and Coopi will act. The objective is to improve the empowerment of the local community, to reach territory integration and long term business sustainability of the supply chain (for the company) and promote population's development (for Coopi).

Internalization of company: invest in new emerging markets benefiting of Coopi consulting for synergetic projects on the territory and the local community.

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Source: Web site of Coopi<sup>22</sup>

The typology of partnerships assigned by Coopi offer a large choice of relationships and involvement according to the objectives of the company, going from a simple financial donation to the creation of a common project. Coopi believes that these partnerships offer not only real opportunities for the two partners but also for the overall stakeholders and project beneficiaries. Coopi highlights the advantages deriving from the collaboration for the company.

The concrete benefices the collaborations convey to the company partners are:

- Increase the intangible resources values of the enterprise (organization capital, human capital, relational capital).
- Reputational impact, reinforce brand awareness and market differentiation.
- Become a member of a high value relational network composed by responsive target-group, opinion leader, media, research center.
- Become a protagonist regarding social responsibility and cooperation dialogs.
- Improve the ability to compete through innovative solutions to satisfy social and environmental pressures of the stakeholders (clients, employees, providers...).
- Safeguard your sustainability through an assiduous attention toward risk management and a proper evaluation of opportunities, cooperating in new emerging situations in which Coopi is deeply involved.
- Obtain fiscal benefices on investment.

There are also benefices specifically deriving from the collaboration with Coopi. For example, the nonprofit organization stresses the visibility on the Coopi communication canal (Coopi News, web site, electronic Newsletter, Coopi blog and social network), the utilization of the logo and the visibility of the company 'slogo. The collaborations outcome is not only due to competences, know-how and resources, but are also the results of an exponential growth of opportunities, intangible resources and relational capital.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.coopi.org/en/aboutus/ourorganization/>

Table 6. Presentation of Guna

<b>Denomination</b>	<b>Guna S.p.a</b>
<b>Identity</b>	Guna is an Italian pharmaceutical firm. Guna is the leader in the sector of the production and distribution of homeopathic medicine.
<b>Creation</b>	Pizzoccaro, Adriana and Alessandro founded Guna in 1983. The objective was to diffuse and use an effective medicine without collateral damages, attentive to the global human body, mind and spirit. One of the principal objectives is to help each individual to reach its own ideal health condition.
<b>Activities</b>	Training programs for doctors, pharmacists, and health worker. Promotion and distribution of biological medicine, laboratory scientist research. Support to large number of associations working in favor of doctor and pharmacist formation.
<b>Vision</b>	Contributing to construct a better world through the maintenance of a harmonious health, beauty and vitality.
<b>Mission</b>	Guna aims at sharing its values and its medicine model based on the human and its harmony with the nature.
<b>International Presence</b>	Guna is present in 30 countries.
<b>Staff</b>	Guna is composed of 226 employees.
<b>Saes</b>	In 2012 the balance sheet achieved 51,4 million of sales. Guna has 30% of the homeopathic national market share.

<sup>23</sup> Avantgarde therapy

Source: Web site of Guna<sup>24</sup>

*Guna and Csr: we are not “doing” csr: we “are” our own social responsibility*

Since its creation, corporate social responsibility is a concept always more integrated into Guna’ strategy. CSR in Guna is not a concept of philanthropy but is the desire to contaminate other company’s sector with their CSR ideas. In 2012, Guna has dedicated 129 CSR days to express and spread its concept. Additionally, Guna received various certificates from different institutions demonstrating the recognition from the civil society for its commitment and excellence. For instance, in 2012 and 2013 Guna received the “Italian public affairs Awards 2012”<sup>25</sup>, the “Grandesign Etico”<sup>26</sup>, the “Sodalitas Social Award 2013”<sup>27</sup>, the “Premio Jose Leon Amero Award 2013” and the “European CSR Award 2013”<sup>28</sup>. Guna is a successful company showing that business can have an human nature, and that beauty is also the result of a correct health paradigm.

The principal priorities of Guna’s CSR are:

- To intensify the CSR into a real strategic dimension becoming a real business model guiding the top management decisions.
- To promote transparent guidelines, management decisions, collective interest documents and construct together with the stakeholders the annual report.
- To be aware and admit the discrepancy between predetermined and reached objectives. Each objectives not reached can be an opportunity to think and modify business intervention model and projects.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.guna.it/>

<sup>25</sup> Certification of health institutions relationships excellence

<sup>26</sup> Prestigious recognition for design and efficacy

<sup>27</sup> Prestigious certificate for corporate social responsibility commitment

<sup>28</sup> Recognition of pioneering initiatives focused on successful partnerships between business and-non business organizations

*Guna and nonprofit partnerships: guidelines, the basis for good partnerships*

Guna has created guidelines for charity and sponsorship activities to frame and express the importance given to interventions improving the surrounding world. The objective is

to realize high innovative value projects. The guidelines present partnerships projects in which Guna can contribute, at a financial, professional and creative level.

Just as well as Coopi, Guna has exclusion criteria. For instance Guna prefers not to contribute to short term occasional events, projects including Guna's products, or projects being in contradictions with business values and ethics.

Guna gives preferences to social organizations linked to its core business: health prevention, homeopathic, wellbeing, health prevention, sustainability and other connected activities. Moreover, Guna selects its partnerships when the project can efficiently generate a redistribution to one or more stakeholders of the value reached by the project.

*Outline of the project: "Medicina interculturale in Paraguay: opportunità di integrazione socioeconomica per i giovani indigeni" <sup>29</sup>*

Table 7. Presentation of the Partnership Coopi-Guna

<b>Medicina interculturale in Paraguay: opportunità di integrazione socioeconomica per i giovani indigeni</b>	
<b>Length of the partnership</b>	2009 - 2012
<b>Project field</b>	<u>Health</u> : Medicinal plant. Valorize and enforce indigenous population

<sup>29</sup> Intercultural Medicine in Paraguay : opportunity of socioeconomic integration for young indigenous

	<p>knowledge on natural and traditional medicine.</p>
<p><b>Number of partners</b></p>	<p><u>Institutional Partner:</u> European Union</p> <p><u>Italian Partners:</u> Coopi and Guna</p> <p><u>Local Partners:</u> Katupyry (ONG), Pa'i Puku (radio), National University of Agronomy of Paraguay, anthropological research center of Catholic University Paraguay CEADUC, Chaco region.</p>
<p><b>Objectives</b></p>	<p><u>The principal objective:</u> to reduce the level of poverty and improve the access to basic services for the indigenous population of Chaco, Paraguay. The goal is to promote and stabilize workers integration at a cultural and ecological level.</p>
<p><b>Typology of the Partnership</b></p>	<p>The typology of relationships experienced by the partners have gone through different steps. Coopi makes the project, and by consequence, Coopi has participated in all the phases of the project. Guna's involvement has been graduated. The description of the partnership's typology is therefore focused on the commitment of Guna:</p> <p><u>Support to a project:</u> initially, Guna integrated the project being essentially a co-donor supporting the project.</p> <p><u>Skill sharing:</u> Afterwards, Guna provided to Coopi important technical support and expertise on the project. Meanwhile Coopi has shared important knowledge on the medicinal plants of Paraguay.</p> <p><u>Common project on the field:</u> one of the objectives of the project is the national and international commercialization of the plants. Coopi has succeeded to develop regional distribution of some medicines and there are currently working on the international commercialization through Guna's commercialization.</p> <p><u>International corporate volunteer:</u> Coopi would like to provide more managerial capability to the indigenous employees. Consequently, Guna and Coopi are thinking about the possibility for an employee of</p>



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**Strategy of actions**

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Guna to go for several months in Paraguay to train the employees. This phase is still hypothetical; it will be examined after the commercialization phase.

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The focus: conserve and extend the traditional indigenous knowledge on natural medicine.

The instruments: creation of micro companies specialized in the production of traditional medicine. Creation of intercultural micro pharmacy within the indigenous community of Chaco.

Vision: reevaluate local traditions, offer employments to ostracize indigenous, improve health access services.

Coherence between objectives and strategy: Production and utilization of biological medicine can be good bases to construct a public health system that can guarantee to all the citizens a good access to different therapies, helping the integration of indigenous population. Moreover, the micro firms based on the distribution of natural resources are a good strategy to create a long-term sustainable project for the Chaco region.

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**Strategic importance**

Strategic importance of the project: In Paraguay, medicinal plants represent a unique worldwide reality, with approximately 5 000 different plants. The knowledge on the therapeutic secret of these plants goes back to the pre-Columbian age but migrations and the disintegration process of the indigenous community have added difficulties to the transmission of knowledge, while the deforestation impedes reproduction of the plants.

Strategic importance for the partner: Coopi is present in Paraguay since 2002, especially in the agriculture sector. Its knowledge on the country and the local actors is significant. For the NGO it is a good opportunity to reinforce its presence in Paraguay through a long-term socioeconomic project that aims at being sustainable. Guna was not

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	<p>present in Paraguay but the strategic opportunity for the company stand in the fact that Guna appears to be a perfect partner due to its technical knowledge on the biological medicine. Moreover, this project demonstrates the capacity of Guna to put in action its CSR strategy within a real business model. Additionally, when the commercialization phase will start, Guna will be a model of social company . This is an ambitious project, going far beyond charitable actions, and gathering two qualified partners to realize it.</p>
<b>Role of Coopi</b>	<p>Coopi has thought the entire project and has managed all the phases of execution, involving all the local and institutional partners.</p>
<b>Role of Guna</b>	<p>Provide financial support, technical skills, and channel of distribution.</p>
<b>Results</b>	<p><u>Creation of micro firms constituted by young indigenous</u>: able to manage the structure, harvest and produce the medicinal plants. A laboratory of 127 meters has been constructed to work on plant transformation.</p> <p><u>Creation of the nursery and scientific encyclopedias</u>: a nursery able to cultivate 20 000 plants</p> <p><u>Support health politic toward the population and provide public awareness.</u></p> <p><u>Production and commercialization of natural medicine</u>: for the moment the products are commercialized just in Paraguay (waiting for authorization for exportation). To realize this activity, it is included the creation of other laboratories and nurseries.</p> <p><u>Promotion of a public policy on young indigenous integration</u>: this project has the objective to be replicated in other Latin American countries.</p>
<b>Principal Features</b>	<p><u>Direct beneficiaries</u>:</p>

(2012)

- 20 young indigenous working in the micro firms
- 400 women and young indigenous involved in the harvest of medicinal plants
- 40 local authorities and actors of civil society presented in the area of intervention of the project
- 11 500 indigenous involved within the area of intervention of the project

Indirect beneficiaries: 35 000 people, equivalent to the total of the indigenous population of the Center and North of Chaco (more vulnerable regions).

**Observations**

GUNA wins the award “Sodalitas Social Award 2013” and “European CSR Award 2013”, the most prestigious premium for social responsibility. The premium awarded the project “Medicina Interculturale in Paraguay” realized in collaboration with the NGO Coopi, to recuperate and save the natural medicinal knowledge of Central-American indigenous. The premiums stress the idea that the project go far beyond simple charity action, and is finalized to the creation of micro firms in Paraguay dedicated to the production of medicinal plants, obtained from the active substances of the endogenous flora of the Chaco’s region, particularly to the reach of medicinal plants.

Source: Personal elaboration

***6.1.2 The French case study: ‘Nutrimad à Madagascar’<sup>30</sup>, a successful partnership accomplished by Gret and Danone (Blédina)***

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<sup>30</sup> Nutrimad in Madagascar

Table 8. Presentation of the Gret

<b>Denomination</b>	<b>GRET – Groupe de recherche et d’échanges technologiques<sup>32</sup></b>
<b>Identity</b>	Gret is a French development NGO. Gret tenures the ‘solidarity business’ certification and detaines ‘global interest’ label.
<b>Creation</b>	Gret was founded in 1976. It has been actively fighting poverty and inequalities for 37 years in the field and though policies. GRET is known as the ‘Professionnels du développement solidaire’ <sup>33</sup> .
<b>Sectors of activity</b>	climate change, international trade and trade negotiations, agricultural development and food security, urban social development and housing, drinking water and sanitation, energy, agriculture commodity chains and consumption, land tenure, information management and ICTs, natural resource management, media, micro-insurance (health and agriculture), microfinance, nutrition, strengthening the actors of social change, business development services, and training and vocational insertion.
<b>Vision</b>	<p>The vision of development: to fight against poverty and inequalities, it requires the best skills. GRET defends a professional approach to development and enriches the sector with knowledge and innovative solutions.</p> <p>The GRET believes that developing country people are actors’ citizen in their development. Therefore, it does not do charity or acts with them, favoring the dignity of citizenship over handouts, capacity building over substitution, contribution to public policy</p>

<sup>31</sup> Commit, act and innovate for a fairest world

<sup>32</sup> Research and technological exchange Group

<sup>33</sup> Professionals for Fair Development

	over recycled unsuitable models, and working with the economic sector over sterile opposition.
<b>Mission</b>	GRET has professionals intervening in a broad range of subjects to provide lasting, innovative solutions for fair development. The Gret designs and implements field projects, provides expertise, runs networks and defends ideas, produces and disseminates references, and is considered a management specialist.
<b>International Presence</b>	Gret has branches offices in 13 countries and intervenes in 14 countries worldwide. In 2012, Gret has realized 150 projects in 30 countries.
<b>Staff</b>	680 professionals of which 11,5% of them work in Headquarters.
<b>Budget</b>	In 2012, Gret managed 20 million euros. 85% of these funds have been dedicated to project fields, 7% for expertise and short missions, 6% for studies, research and capitalization, and 2% for animation, communication and formation activities.
<b>Headquarters</b>	Gret is based in Nogent sur Marne, France, and has 24 branches offices in 13 countries.

Source: Web site if Gret<sup>34</sup>

### *Gret and corporations: partnerships for development*

To lead its actions, Gret establishes alliances and builds diversified partnerships based on pragmatism, loyalty, and mutual expectations. Its partnerships come from the project fields or headquarters, to reinforce the relevancy of its activities. Gret believes

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.gret.org/decouvrir-le-gret/qui-sommes-nous/>

that companies can contribute to development. With the collaborations of businesses, the objective of the Gret is to support small companies in developing countries (start-up, capacity building, shareholding), and to partner with large companies in developed countries in the context of their corporate social strategy and environmental responsibilities policies.

In 2011, Gret developed an internal instrument for raising funds, the ‘Fonds d’Innovation pour le Développement (FIND)’<sup>35</sup>, with an endowment of one million euros. It brings large corporate and individual donors together to build innovative development solutions. It finances GRET’s technological and social innovation programs, shares the lessons learned from them, and formulates concrete proposals destined to promote innovative development practices and fuel companies’ CSR and R&D strategies.

Since 2006, Gret has developed approximately 40 collaborations in France, in service provision, patronage, skills patronage, with 20 companies. Four of them were huge scale partnerships (more than 100 000 euros). The partnerships mainly focused on water and sanitation, and health, two of the Gret competencies field.

These collaborations were going beyond the economic support, benefiting from companies’ competencies and skills according to their core businesses. Furthermore, the Gret has allowed companies to have a better knowledge on developing country population needs, and has encouraged them to improve their practices to better answer these needs.

The Gret unlike to Coopii, does not have, specialized documents dedicated to business partnerships, such as guidelines or instruments of cooperation. For every partnerships offer, the Gret conducts an internal analyze and its internal commission decides, on a case-by-case base, the possibility to partner on a specific project and its conditions.

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<sup>35</sup> The innovation for development fund

*Outline of Danone: 'bringing health through food to as many people as possible' and its subsidiary Blédina: 'Du côté des mamans'*<sup>36</sup>

On the project analyzed, the Gret has collaborated with Danone and its subsidiary Blédina, therefore the outline of the company will be on the Multinational and its branch.

Table 9. Presentation of Danone and Blédina

<b>Denomination</b>	<b>Danone - Blédina</b>
<b>Identity</b>	<p><u>Danone</u> is French food-products multinational corporation. Danone is the worldwide leader in fresh dairy products, the worldwide number 2 in bottled waters and baby nutrition, and the European leader in medical nutrition.</p> <p><u>Blédina</u>, subsidiary of Danone, is the French leader for infant nutrition with 50% of the market shares.</p>
<b>Creation</b>	<p><u>Danone</u> was founded in 1919 by Isaac Carasso, a pioneer in the invention and commercialization of the yogurt. It is in 1994 that the official name of the Group was Danone. Danone was born from the belief that nutrition is the essential mean by which man can build and preserve their health.</p> <p><u>Blédina</u> was created in 1881 by two pharmacists named Léon Jacquemaire and Maurice Miguet but under the name of Blédine. It is in 1952 that Blédine became Blédina. Blédina has been a subsidiary of Danone since 1970.</p>
<b>Activities</b>	<p><u>Danone's</u> principal activities are fresh dairy products, bottled water,</p>

<sup>36</sup> On the mothers' side

	<p>baby nutrition (included the brand Blédina), medical nutrition.</p> <p><u>Blédina</u> is specialized in infant milk and infant food.</p>
<b>Vision</b>	<p><u>Danone</u> aims at delivering health through nutrition to as many people as possible.</p> <p><u>Blédina</u> aims at making babies growing up and simplifying mother's life.</p>
<b>Mission</b>	<p><u>Danone</u> everyday jobs consist in offering tasty and balanced food products which deliver a health benefit to a large number of consumers, and are adapted to their markets' specific public health concerns. In order to do this, Danone relies on the know-how of its Research &amp; Development teams.</p> <p><u>Blédina</u> creates, makes, and sells easy to use products favoring babies blossoming.</p>
<b>International Presence</b>	<p><u>Danone</u> is present worldwide, in Africa, Middle East, North America, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe and Occidental Europe.</p> <p><u>Blédina</u> exports to approximately 60 different countries.</p>
<b>Staff</b>	<p><u>Danone</u> includes 101 885 employees.</p> <p><u>Blédina</u> includes 1 504 employees.</p>
<b>Sales</b>	<p>In 2012, Danone' sales reached 20 billion of euros, demonstrating their ability to bring health through food to an ever-growing number of consumers. 60 % of these sales came from high-growth markets, primarily emerging countries.</p>
<b>Headquarters</b>	<p>Danone is based in Paris, France.</p>

Source: Web site of Danone<sup>37</sup> and Blédina<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.danone.com/?lang=en>



*Danone and CSR: 'creating economic social value'*

Danone's origins stemmed from the belief that food is the main mean by which people build up and maintain their good health. Danone undertakes various actions, on biodiversity, climate change, water, agriculture and packaging issues to promote health and protect nature. Danone's products come right from the heart of nature's cycles. Danone believes that companies cannot succeed in the long-term if they turn their back on the society, if they only look to their short-term economic gain. Danone's founder understood very quickly that creating economic value and social value are both essential to a company's strength. It is common to confront the "social" and "economic" spheres, where social needs are perceived as a cost and therefore generally detrimental to a company's competitiveness. A Danone vision is different. Food contributes to health, which is at the core of Danone's mission. Danone's actions are therefore guided by its "dual economic and social project", enabling Danone to adapt to local environments and come up with right models creating both economic value as well as social and environmental ones. Largely, Danone's success and its reputation have been built on its social skills, human right and social policies.

*Danone and nonprofit partnerships: Ecosystem and danone.communities, two examples of instruments leading to co-creation and social business*

Danone is a leader in terms of social innovation initiatives. Danone specially gives importance to understanding social issues and stakeholders, measuring social impact, co-development and co-management, particularly with NGOs. Danone believes that combining the means and expertise of both companies and nonprofit organizations provide effective answer to fight against poverty and unemployment, accessing to health care and education.

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.bledina.com/>

Danone has two special instruments promoting social business through nonprofit partnerships: the Ecosystem and the danone.communities.

The Ecosystem is an instrument promoting the collaborations with nonprofit organizations in order to co-create projects providing innovative responses. By co-creation, Danone intends that the entire project is managed with the nonprofit organizations: Co-created, co-managed, co-monitored, joint communication on the project, and co-ended the project. Social actions now require collaborations to go beyond philanthropy and convert donations into co-investment. According to Danone, these partnerships are a win-win collaboration in which Danone can offer operational, technical, economical, equipment, and network skills, while the nonprofit partner can complete these resources thanks to its knowledge of local needs and challenges, social support, local network, legitimacy and social impact assessment. The success of Danone Ecosystem Fund provides a useful illustration of this approach. In three years, the fund invested in 43 projects, some of which have already become sizeable in their own rights. These projects are all conceived and managed locally by the subsidiaries of Danone in partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations.

The “danone.communities” is a network for social businesses. It is based on the idea that one way to reduce poverty and malnutrition is to create sustainable micro-firms devoted to social objectives. “Danone.communities” appeared in 2007, it is an original financial tool that enables the development of "social business" initiatives. The challenges are the following:

- Expand Garmeen Danone Foods, the first small yogurt production developed in Bangladesh.
- Assist the development of social companies’ projects in various part of the world.
- Develop partnerships with local actors or NGOs, based on this original business model, in order to associate their know-how with Danone.
- Bring together within the “danone.communities” network all the actors contributing to this project.

*Outline of the project: “Nutrimad, Madagascar: ‘Le Business social pour lutter contre la malnutrition infantile”<sup>39</sup>*

Table 10. Presentation of the Partnership Gret- Danone

<b>Nutrimad, Madagascar : Le Business social pour lutter contre la malnutrition infantile</b>	
<b>Length of the partnership</b>	<p><u>Project</u>: 1997-until today</p> <p><u>Partnership</u>: 2006- 2008</p>
<b>Project field</b>	<p><u>Health</u>: Agro alimentation - Nutrition infant nutrition. Reduce infant malnutrition, create jobs for the disadvantaged local population of Madagascar, and develop the local agribusiness conversion.</p>
<b>Number of partners</b>	<p><u>Institutional Partner</u>: Région île de France, CFSI</p> <p><u>Research institute Partner</u>: IDR institute.</p> <p><u>French Partners</u>: Gret and Danone-Blédina.</p> <p><u>Local Partners</u>: TAF entreprise, Antananarivo region, CDA association Labasan laboratory, Iredec association.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p><u>The principal objective</u>: The program Nutrimad aims at improving the alimentation of the children from poor families in order to reduce infantile malnutrition. The objective of the Nutrimad project is to construct, certify and spread methods that aim at improving infant,</p>

<sup>39</sup> Nutrimad, Madagascar : Social Business to fight against infant malnutrition

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**Typology of  
the  
Partnership**

pregnant women and breast-feeding women alimentation, from the perspective of sustainable development in Madagascar. To realize this objective, Gret has elaborated the concept of “babies restaurants”<sup>40</sup>. They provide quality and cheap complementary aliments produced locally to disadvantages families. In 2005, Gret has started to reflect on the durability of the model. The first contacts between Gret and Danone started in 2005 but the official agreement wad firmmed in 2007. Indeed, at the same time danone.communities was growing. The common objective of the two projects has naturally attracted the two actors to collaborate

Objective of the partnership: Maximize the existing economic model on production-promotion-sales of the infant floor<sup>41</sup>, to promote its extension, while maintaining social and public health objectives, with a view to create a real company. Indeed, since the creation of the first ‘babies’ restaurant’, Gret has realized that the offer was fitting with the social needs of the families and making it last was consequently a sustainable solution. Accordingly, the two years collaboration with Danone should have resulted in the improvement of the overall model to create a social busibess, currently named Nutri’zaza.

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Common project on the field: Although the project Nutrimad was yet present, the ambition of the two actors was to realize the study of the feasibility and durability, with respect to the production and commercialization of the economic model of the product and the service. It has been conducted on the field.

Skill sharing: Danone has contributed to the project through its know-

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<sup>40</sup> “Hotelin-Jazakely” in Madagascan

<sup>41</sup> “Koba Aina” in Madagascan

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**Strategy of actions**

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how on marketing expertise and consultancy, while Gret, being yet involved in Madagascar, had local knowledge on local needs, local network and data information. Moreover, Gret thought the initial concept.

Support product distribution and services: The project and the partnership itself have the ambition to distribute the model in other countries.

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Focus: the project has social goals, the ones to contribute to infant malnutrition, create employments and improve local agribusiness.

Instruments: Financial independence of the model, should reach a level of profitability guaranteeing its own financing. The instruments to realize this objective are:

- The global analyze of the 'babies restaurants' (supply of raw materials, costs and process manufacturing, product, distribution, sales prices to consumers, communication, organization and so on).
- Complementary market analyzes.
- Identification of the potential improvement of the model.
- Definition of the action plan and measure of success by areas: production, product, distribution, marketing, monitoring, institutional partnerships.
- Implement the action plan and test the different maximization options of the initial model.
- Analyze the results obtained and validation of the most relevant options.
- Report redaction on the viability of the model and on the possible extension conditions of the model reviewed.

Coherence between objectives and strategy: The poor availability of

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**Strategic  
importance**

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local agricultural product impedes the possibility to prevent malnutrition. The creation of ‘babies restaurants’ place in which it will be possible to provide quality foods, public awareness and cheap quality products to disadvantaged family is a coherent concept to fight against malnutrition, help local agribusiness, and awareness. Visibility of the restaurants, coherent location, and appropriate training of the vendors, are good strategies to learn and experience good nutrition practices. Through this concept, Nutrimad could have test the attractiveness from the poor families for infant floor, resulting in the elaboration of a cheap-quality infant floor. The professional advice from one of the worldwide leader on baby nutrition is perfectly coherent with the sustainability objective of the project and its expansion.

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Strategic importance of the project: Enquiries conducts by Gret in Madagascar have demonstrated that most of the children were receiving nutrition not appropriate with respect to their needs. This fact was linked to the global poverty context, to the few families’ knowledge on food, as well as to the difficulties to access complementary quality food. By consequence, the strategy to improve nutrition to less than two years olds children, through the development of appropriate food solutions and nutritional education to improve behaviors, is coherent.

Strategic importance for the partner: Gret is present in Madagascar since 1997 fighting against malnutrition. The results of the enquiries have definitely stressed the necessity to develop a long term and sustainable project solving the challenges highlighted.

For Danone, that wanted to develop its social business, Nutrimad project was totally fitting with danone.communités. Moreover, Danone had the knowledge regarding large-scale production and

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	<p>pursue of productivity gains, so that it was the perfect partner.</p> <p>This is an ambitious project, going far beyond charitable actions, and gathering two qualified partners to realize it.</p>
<b>Role of Gret</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide internal expertise on nutrition, project management and so on.</li> <li>- Finance the local and Gret international human resources as well as the recurrent cost of the model.</li> </ul>
<b>Role of Danone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide expertise on nutrition, marketing, management.</li> <li>- Finance the specific market studies and costs linked to the model maximization.</li> </ul>
<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Improvement of the product:</u> packaging, brand, price, positioning, promotion and so on.</li> <li>- <u>Improvement of the model:</u> improve performance of sellers, distribution communication, and formation and so on.</li> <li>- <u>Development of the sustainable product</u></li> <li>- <u>Maximization and development of the distribution</u></li> <li>- <u>Increase the local demand</u></li> <li>- <u>Prepare the expansion of the model</u></li> </ul> <p>The partnership was a success and various components of the product have been changed. Thanks to the improvement provided to the model, the primary objective has been reached: the creation of the social company. Indeed, in 2008, the social company status was created and Nutri'zaza was born. Nutri'zaza, through its social business status, is the concrete representation of the Nutrimad challenge. The elaboration of the rigorous indicators within the partnership is an example of professionalism. The results achieved by the model are an excellent example illustrating the social business.</p>

<p><b>Principal Features</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Real increase in the children level of consumption of the infant floor (in ladle and sachet).</li> <li>- Improvement of the cost-effectiveness of the model. For instance, it reached an increase in sales of 78% with respect to the beginning of the project.</li> <li>- Construction of approximately 60 new ‘babies restaurants’</li> <li>- Creation of employment: 212 jobs created, of which 190 jobs of vendors within the ‘babies’ restaurants’.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Observations</b></p>	<p>The project Nutrimad forms part of the “Nutridev project”. A Gret project aims at reducing malnutrition problems worldwide.</p> <p>Danone did not provide any direct financial investment to the Gret Program. The two organizations had to finance their proper needs and human resources.</p>

Source: Personal elaboration

## 6.2 Results of the interviews

This part consists in the transcription of the main findings that have sprung up from the interviews. In Italy, the interviewees were the corporate and relationship manager and the program manager from Coopi, and the peace manager from Guna. In France, the interviewees were the representative of the Gret in Madagascar, and the ex-local project coordinator from Danone, currently owner of Croissens, a social business consulting organization.



Since the analysis and comparison of the results will be developed in the last chapter, within this part, the attempt is to relate the results ambivalently, according to the each tackled<sup>42</sup>.

### ***6.2.1 The Italian case study: findings from the interviews of Coopi – Guna<sup>43</sup>***

#### *Pertinence of the interlocutor and its role within the partnership*

#### **Coopi**

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Uberto Pedefferri: Latin America, Malawi, Madagascar and Haiti Program Manager.

Licia Casamassima: Corporate and Foundation Relationship Manager.

Within the partnership, Uberto Pedefferri was the administrative manager of the project and Licia Casamassima was in charge of managing the relations with Guna.

#### **Guna**

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Antonella Zanguini: Peace Manager of Guna.

Within the partnership, she was in charge of the communicational aspects with Coopi and the reports activities to Guna.

#### *Partnership creation*

#### **Coopi - Licia Casamassima and Uberto Pedefferri**

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When the financing of the European Union has ended, Coopi was searching for new external supports, including in the private world.

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<sup>42</sup> This part do not intend to transcribe the interviews in its totality, but only to express the most important results of each questions according to the variables analyzed.

<sup>43</sup> The interviews have been done in Italian but the transcription in English are as consistent as possible.

Additionally Coopi was interested to understand whether it was possible to commercialize the plants. Guna had all the requirements and competences that Coopi was looking for. Guna is the Italian leader for homeopathic products.

Thus, Guna was a good technical consultant partner and could comply with the study of the plants' commercialization possibility in Italy. Consequently common elements regarding the projects naturally appeared. Furthermore, Coopi is currently interested in reinforcing managerial competences of the indigenous, with the objective to create a type of Limited Liability Company to provide autonomy and sustainability to the project, in which Guna, being a company, could provide support to realize this objective.

### **Guna - Antonella Zanguini**

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Guna receives offers from NGOs and evaluate them afterwards. For a business, it is important to consider the stakeholders, even to enter upon collaboration. For this project, an employee from Guna was initially motivated to enter upon partnership with Coopi. After evaluation, Guna has noticed the fit between the project and its mission.

Guna was born as a company distributing homeopathic medicine, a 200 years old medicine. Research and innovation on homeopathic medicine is one of the core businesses of Guna. Consequently, the Coopi's project, maintaining a precious ancient knowledge, was totally fitting with the vision of Guna. Additionally, the project also aimed at providing medical assistance to the population, which is one of the missions of Guna. Thus, the project was a strategic one considering its CSR. Guna found coherent the alliance with Coopi, which proved to be a professional NGO, serious and credible, and massively present on the international scene.

*Knowledge transfer Mechanisms: formal/informal*

### **Coopi - Licia Casamassima and Uberto Pedferri**

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For the planning process there is always an initial written proposal including the formal modalities for the two partners. After this phase, throughout the relation, Coopi and Guna used a lot of face-to-face meetings, personal e mails, personal phone calls, and common communication channels. To promote the project Coopi uses its social

network, newsletter and web site, whereas Guna utilizes its corporate sustainability report, company's meetings and web site.

According to Coopi, the relation with Guna was as formal as informal. Each year, when needed to report and stabilize new findings there was a formal exchange, but for all the remaining projects proceeding, relations are informal.

For Coopi, both formal and informal relations are needed for the collaboration success. However if formal is a required and recurrent phase concerning annual report, informal relation is not as easy to establish as formal. Informal relation is the intangible part of the relation that, in this collaboration, led the project ahead. Additionally, Coopi experiences stress the idea that formal part always needs to be there and it is this latter that allows the informal relation to be.

### **Guna - Antonella Zanguini**

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Guna highlights the frequent communication between the two partners.

The principal tools were the e-mail and face-to-face work, informal meetings, but also additional elements such as extra event invitations, network presentation that Guna arguments to be the illustration of the informal relation between the partners.

As well as Coopi, Guna has perceived an evolution in the relation mechanism. Guna feels that the relation intensified along the collaboration leading to a better and frequent communication. As for Guna there was a direct link with the informal relation and the good collaboration.

#### *Mutual Trust*

### **Coopi - Licia Casamassima and Uberto Pedefferri**

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For Coopi, esteem toward the partner is the first basis for trust. By esteem, Coopi intends its alignment with their exclusion criteria, its commitment to business ethics, and its environmental and social certifications. But even if the company respects these conditions it is not certain that there will be trust during the collaboration.

Guna is a trustful partner because of its professionalism, its commitment toward CSR and the way it selects the projects based on its core business.

Trust is the basis for good collaboration. The elements that have helped establishing trust within the relation with Guna have been their frequent and quick communication, their constructive report, their constant feedback, their share approached.

### **Guna - Antonella Zanguini**

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A trustful partner for Guna should be transparent and clear. It should also proposed a clear action plan of its project. Coopi is definitely a trustful partner.

For Guna, the relation has positively evolved, mainly due to the informal communication. The elements that have helped the mutual trust have been the frequent communication, the clear roles and the mutual commitment to the project.

Trust is a fundament of the relationship. Projects in which the partners do not totally trust each other result in projects less successful and less beneficial. It is the specific trust within their relations that led the project to offer new opportunities for the partners.

### *Cultural alignment*

### **Coopi - Licia Casamassima and Uberto Pedferri**

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When selecting a partner Coopi firstly refers to its internal policy and guidelines. Afterwards, Coopi gives importance to the common values between the partners, especially toward the project. Coopi does not look for a partner just for project funding but also for skills and competences exchange.

With respect to cultural alignment issue, Coopi sustains that it is an important variable taken in account when choosing its partner. NGOs and companies are different by nature, but values should converge at a certain moment. Behaviors, functioning and customs do not need to be identical, because it is also the diversity that allows to realize the concretization of project, but the importance is that values and vision on the project are shared.

Thus, the choice of the right partner is determinant for Coopi. Green washing projects or not ethics companies will not be eligible partners. Cultural alignment, through shared social values is so very important for selection.

## **Guna - Antonella Zanguini**

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As Coopi, when selecting a partner Guna firstly refers to its internal policy and guidelines. Guna especially puts attention on the match between core business and philosophy, the usefulness and added value that Guna can provide for the project, the networking, the sustainability of the project, the clear and coherent action plan of the project, and the trust in the partner.

With respect to cultural alignment, for Guna it is a decisive factor when selecting the partner. In the nonprofit world, there is every kind of organizations. The biggest NGOs (such as Coopi, Acra, Cesvi) having a significant international presence, have realized earlier the changes in mentality. The basis for a good collaboration is mutual cultural path. If there is not a common matrix, above all in terms of common values, the collaboration will never go beyond the simple philanthropy.

Thus, the choice of the right partner is determinant. Guna wants to create experiences and provide added value to projects considered useful and sustainable.

### *Organizational fit*

## **Coopi - Licia Casamassima and Uberto Pedeferrri**

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For Coopi, organizational differences between NGOs and businesses are less important and management tools should be similar. Coopi adds that because they are directly in relation with the CSR area, the way of thinking and functioning should be even more similar.

As regards to the partnership's organization, power distribution, design and decision making process, were done naturally between the two structures. Nevertheless, there is a convention at the beginning of the partnership formation stabilizing the mutual roles, responsibilities, benefits and communication aspects, in order to regularize the overall functioning.

Until now, any cultural conflicts have raised between the two entities that could have justified the review the organizational structure. Thus, there were a good organizational fit between Coopi and Gun's structures.

### **Guna - Antonella Zanguini**

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Together with cultural alignment, harmony in terms of organizational culture styles is needed to build a project. However, if there is not a good organizational fit you can always go on thanks to the shared culture. However, if there is neither one of them, it is just philanthropy

According to the structural form of the partnership, it has been formalized upstream various aspects such as the deadline, respective objectives, clear roles, communicational transparency, common decision making and so on.

Guna sustains that they never had organizational conflicts because all the principal elements and respective roles were clearly defined.

#### *Complementary of resources*

### **Coopi - Licia Casamassima and Uberto Pedefferri**

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From a general point of view, the resources Guna has brought to the project are financial, human, networking and technical. Coopi's ones are scientific, human, local and international networking. These types of resources, above all the wealth of the two networks are considered complementary in the eyes of Coopi.

The better the resources are complementary, the better the project management and success are. Coopi has different internal projects confirming this observation.

### **Guna - Antonella Zanguini**

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Concerning the plant commercialization phase of the project, Guna specified that Coopi is in charge to manage local and international authorization for exportation. Guna is in charge to provide an important scientific resource, its laboratory. Afterwards, the commercial and marketing area of Guna should also provide support.

Guna confirms the resources complementarity of the partners. According to Guna, it is crucial for the project that everyone brings its knowledge coherently with its core business. It is also a variable permitting to clearly define roles and responsibilities.

### *Usefulness of knowledge (benefits)*

#### **Coopi - Licia Casamassima and Uberto Pedferri**

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The principal benefits Guna provided for Coopi are co-donation, technical and commercial supports. Coopi hopes to benefit from a deepest technical expertise regarding the commercialization analysis of the products, their aesthetics and other elements. Additionally, Guna provides visibility, sustainability, and continuity in the sense that Guna permits to go beyond the initial initiatives.

According to Coopi, Guna's principal benefits deriving from the collaboration are the technical new knowledge acquired on the medicinal plants, new market (in the sense of new products), a project accentuated its CSR commitment, visibility especially through the CSR awards won, and an increase in internal employees motivations.

#### **Guna - Antonella Zanguini**

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The specific benefit Guna provided to the project was an economic viability, scientific contribution, practical and commercial support soon.

Concerning Guna, it is sincerely satisfied by the outcome of the project and the attention and recognition it that it has demonstrated to grab. Observing that traditional medicine is always more spread is a great satisfaction. Guna also gets knowledge and information on these new plants and it will reinforce the company.

### *Most important variables for collaboration success*

#### **Coopi - Licia Casamassima and Uberto Pedferri**

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The factors identified as essential for the success of this partnership are:

1. The convergence of values
2. The common vision of the project. The partner can have different proper objectives they want to reach but the vision of the project should be shared, it should be a win-win relationship.
3. The mutual trust

4. Complementarity in terms of competences
5. Clear roles and responsibilities

### **Guna - Antonella Zanguini**

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The fundament for Guna is to believe in the project and involve employees. Successful partnerships are an experience for the two institutions.

The factors identified as essential for the success of this partnership are:

1. Common vision of the project. This includes cultural and organizational resemblance and share values.
2. Mutual trust
3. Skills and competences exchange
4. The fact that each of the partners can achieve its role. Everything works if the partners have the opportunity to express themselves as best as possible. For instance, Guna is a company and has important managerial skills that can really be useful phases of the project, and that should be put into action. Respecting roles and competences of the partners, is a delicate but decisive point.

*Opinion regarding the partnership evolution*

### **Coopi - Licia Casamassima and Uberto Pedferri**

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Alliances between nonprofit organizations and profit ones are gaining in importance. Convergences of interests are always more important, and should not decrease. For a social project to become profitable, the two partners should collaborate. Mutual and personal competences concerning the two worlds are useful to be share. Networks are drastically complementary. For instance, managerial competences are still often missing within the NGOs whereas businesses require the experiences accumulated by the NGOs on developing country's needs. Specifically regarding development projects, NGOs will be always more solicited to support the growth of small local businesses due to its networking and its knowledge of poor class social needs. Depending on the reality of the countries, there are spaces for partnerships.



## **Guna - Antonella Zanguini**

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The relation should always more converge toward strategic alliances. When a company is deeply involved in CSR, the projects accomplished in partnership with nonprofits are real collaborations. However, the nonprofits have to do an effort to modulate their proposals when asking companies' collaboration. Companies act differently; some are more committed and others more philanthropic. For instance, Guna wants to have a real role within the project. However, Guna perceives changes in the mentality. The company is nowadays contacted by nonprofits having their core business better linked and respecting the guidelines.

Guna believes that projects should always come from the nonprofit part because the company should not use projects to do marketing or scientific research.

### ***6.2.2 The French case study: findings from the interviews of Gret – Danone<sup>44</sup>***

#### *Pertinence of the interlocutor and its role within the partnership*

## **Gret**

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Luc Arnaud: Representative of the Gret in Madagascar.

Within the partnership, Luc Arnaud was the Program Coordinator of the Nutrimad project.

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<sup>44</sup> The interviews have been done in French but the transcription in English will be as consistent as possible.

## **Danone**

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Emilie Pleuvret: Owner of Croissens, organization specialized in social business consulting.

She used to work at Bédina, Danone's subsidiary, from 2007 until 2008, as affordability project coordinator. Within the partnership, Emilie Pleuvret was the local project coordinator in Madagascar.

### *Partnership creation*

## **Gret – Luc Arnaud**

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In this phase of the Nutrimad project, the Gret was considering the different alternatives to ensure the sustainability of the 'babies 'restaurant' activity. After having excluded municipality and associations, Gret has turned its attention on the company. The objective was to think about the creation of a social business.

At the same time, Danone, through danone.communities, was interested by the social business and the bottom-up pyramid approach. From this moment, the two entities had the idea to start collaborated. Ideas were converging.

## **Danone - Emilie Pleuvret (Ex Danone)**

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Accessing emerging markets was yet within the global strategy of Danone. Danone was interested in getting knowledge on the creation of new business model able to reach power population. Thus, Danone was looking to carry out a social partnership.

Gret has been recommended to Danone because of its skills and knowledge Danone wanted to learn. Gret was also interested in the skills developed by Danone for this project. After series of personal meetings and discussions, the project appealed.

### *Knowledge transfer Mechanisms: formal/informal*

## **Gret – Luc Arnaud**

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Gret and Danone were reporting all 3 months on projects monitoring and the overall advancement. The mains tools used to communicate were the action plan, mails and

meetings in Paris and in Madagascar. Face-to-Face meetings were quite important too. Frequency of contacts intensified throughout the relation.

Gret qualified the relation with Danone of formal because everything was stabilized with formal documents and conventions. The relation was formal all through the partnership.

For this kind of partnership, formal relation is appropriate. Indeed, each one should know its role to accomplish it. Afterwards report should be written and clear.

### **Danone - Emilie Pleuvret (Ex Danone)**

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Accordingly, the instruments of communication were mail, telephone and local meetings. Danone and Gret were reporting approximately every three months. The monitoring of this project was very important and Danone frequently came in Madagascar. It was a “near” management. Tools were internally diverging. For instance, Danone preferred numeral PPT and Gret literary report.

Danone is a very formal structure. For instance Emilie Pleuvret had to formally report each month to Danone. But generally speaking it is preferable to have the two relations, formal and informal.

The importance is to enter upon relation with the partner according to the means preferred, to respect the identity of the organization.

### *Mutual Trust*

### **Gret – Luc Arnaud**

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A partner is considered trustful when its ‘agenda’ is similar to the Gret ones and has the same opinions. It is not recommended to discover, while being in partnership, that visions differ. Agreements should be formalized and respected to permit the collaboration to go ahead.

There were some slight crisis between the two partners but the relation was generally good because each one knew what to do.

Mutual trust is essential, without it, it is difficult to move forward. Mutual trust is a result of a formal relation in which all the steps are precise and followed, and the two partners know their roles, objectives and expectations.

### **Danone - Emilie Pleuvret (Ex Danone)**

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A partner is considered confident when there is transparency, when every result is communicated, when every problem is reported rapidly. Trust is also the ability of the partners to mutually defend the project and the partnership.

External members have questioned relations between Gret and Danone, but Gret has reported every internal doubt and decisions to Danone, this established trust. The relation with Gret has been good.

Transparency and other issues should be written and formalized, it is important for trust.

### *Cultural alignment*

### **Gret – Luc Arnaud**

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Gret works with companies from the same sector of activity. The Gret is interested in getting a technical know-how linked to the project conducted. Consequently, when selecting the company, Gret firstly looks for a technical compatible partner able to support the project. Selections are empirical; there are not formal guidelines or other instruments, only voting within the general assembly.

With respect to cultural alignment issue, Gret sustains that is an important issue taken in account in the upstream part of the selection. Before entering upon partnership with Danone, Indded, Gret met Emmanuel Faber, number two of Danone Group, and understood the sharing visions on the project. However, between the values published and the ones on the field, there are differences and interests that can lead to divergence. It sometimes happened with Blédina, concerning nutrition awareness, pricing policy, or marketing strategies.

Thus, it is important to share the vision of the project to help alleviating cultural conflicts that can easily appear due to the cultural differences. It is essential to

collaborate with an enterprise that shares the same objective and is able to bring its own knowledge to the project.

### **Danone - Emilie Pleuvret (Ex Danone)**

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Usually, organizations know what they want and not want. Danone was conscious about its competences; it knew to sell but not necessarily to the poor. Thus, the most decisive factor for Danone was the learning, the apprenticeship. To select the partner, Danone adopted a method based on discussions and dialogs, to better understand the fit amongst the partners and the project.

With respect to cultural alignment issue, Danone recognizes that it has been an important decisional factor. Indeed, there were many meetings between Gret and Danone, above all concerning societal mission values. They have share this notion of culture concerning the issue of the project. The partnership was characterized by a long initial contacts period to understand the mutual intentions and quality of the partners. However, cultural misunderstands surged during the partnership. For instance, communication tools or dialogs were the reflection of a cultural chock.

The importance is to be sure on mutual intentions and interests, meaning on the vision and mission of the project.

### *Organizational fit*

### **Gret – Luc Arnaud**

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On the contrary, organizations management styles were perfectly fitting. With respect to the design, power distribution and top decision-making process, they were not precisely pre-defined. Actually, there was an important pilot phase in which Gret and Danone stabilized the mutual responsibilities and roles, but afterwards each one of them was doing its missions. Throughout of the partnership, however, members of Blédina worked within the Gret structure to support the project.

### **Danone - Emilie Pleuvret (Ex Danone)**

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There was an important pilot phase in which mutual responsibilities and roles have been established. Even if there was not a common structure, there was a common project, and within this project, responsibilities were clearly pre-defined. The two structures are professionals, so management styles were mostly fitting. The issue was more on communication incompatibility, in the sense that the two structures had different instruments and ways of communicating, and this was creating conflicts.

#### *Complementary of resources*

### **Gret – Luc Arnaud**

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Gret had the Nutrimad team, the vendors, the nutritionist and researchers. Danone resources were their human resources (members sent in mission in Madagascar), the commercial manager of the area who supported the project, technical audit, and support in terms of business strategies.

Although, Danone was sometimes discovering elements yet known by Gret, the resources were greatly complementary between the partners. This complementarity allowed the good collaboration management.

### **Danone - Emilie Pleuvret (Ex Danone)**

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The project was divided between areas. Danone had the Marketing and commercial ones in which it brought its human resources, instruments, financing, expert, and materials and so on. Gret took care of the production, “babies restaurants” construction, and all the Nutrimad local human resources. There were not financial exchange between the structures; each one was financing its proper needs to realize its proper objectives.

The resources were evidently complementary. Complementarity is the base of a good partnership. Danone was in a social business approach, this partnership was not about image. It was an experimental partnership in which complementarities was a key success factor.

### *Usefulness of knowledge (benefits)*

#### **Gret – Luc Arnaud**

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The principal benefit for Gret was to obtain professional advices from an equal of this sector. Gret, thanks to Danone's consulting, could confirm the nutritional quality of its product, of its distribution channels, and have a concrete idea about penetration rates. Gret also benefited from a marketing and strategic support, especially on the creation of the businesses' action plan. As a whole, Gret could have technical advices on the overall project, permitting to confirm their capacities and reinforce them.

Similarly, for Blédina, it was interesting to understand how to attract the poorest social class, and how to work with them. Danone also benefited from Gret network, mainly on the institutional contact such as the national policy on malnutrition fight.

#### **Danone - Emilie Pleuvret (Ex Danone)**

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Danone's answer is in match with the one of Gret.

Additionally, Danone benefited from a real apprenticeship fitting with its expectations and employee's motivations.

### *Most important variables for collaboration success*

#### **Gret – Luc Arnaud**

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The factors identified as essential for the success of this partnership are:

1. When starting a partnership, it is necessary to have mutual listening, and identity respect. Gret respected the professionalism of Blédina and Blédina respected the commitment of Gret. This is fundamental.
2. Afterwards, along the partnership, it is essential that all the phases and responsibilities are formalized and stabilized.

### **Danone - Emilie Pleuvret (Ex Danone)**

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The factors identified as essential for the success of this partnership are:

1. Shared vision. A shared vision on the project that the two partners want to do.
2. Mutual trust and esteem a priori. If there is distrust at the beginning the partnership will never concretize, and even if there is trust and esteem a priori, conflicts can emerge. That is why the trust, at least a priori is essential.
3. Mutual respect. Respect of the skills brought in the partnership. Respect comes from the fact that your human and technic qualities are recognized.

*Opinion regarding the partnership evolution*

### **Gret – Luc Arnaud**

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Collaboration between nonprofit organizations and companies are getting in importance concerning the development of projects. Nowadays, you observe that many people achieved scattered projects but the sustainability and continuity of these projects should be a long-term commitment. Sponsor tool is not appropriate. However, creating social businesses that will give sustainability to the projects are a good alternative.

For a long time, people have thought that for poorest individuals, community and nonprofit organizations should support them, but now governance and sustainability issues are demonstrating the contrary.

Companies status, though technical support from big firms is the future to fight against inequalities. Nonprofits organizations want to suggest the quality-cheapest product to the largest number of individuals as possible, and companies are interested in targeting disadvantaged clients. This is where the two organizations become united.

### **Danone - Emilie Pleuvret (Ex Danone)**

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There has been a trend toward the idea that it could be possible to match two entities, a priori not well matched, and accomplish innovative projects. Since this phenomenon,



many organizations have started to create partnerships without common visions or complementarity, just for the fact to be in partnership.

Mentalities have started to go beyond this simple conception, but old ways of thinking are still present. Companies that have a deep corporate social responsibility are doing relevant partnerships. I believe we are going to get into professionalism in this direction. For nonprofits it could be more difficult to realize due to the time and resources needed. There is also a problem of mentality from the civil society, which still does not understand the strategic philanthropy of these decisions.

Even more importantly, the backers do not have instruments allowing to invest in social businesses because of the historic contradiction between investing in a company or offering to a NGO.

A complicated issue needs new ways of thinking, new instruments permitting to evaluate the performance of these hybrid models. However, it is still difficult to say that we are going to benchmark NGOs and create competition. Financial valorization of social impacts is a still far topic.

## **7. Results and findings of the case studies Coopi-Guna and Gret-Danone**

This chapter aims at analyzing the results arising from the interviews of the Italian partnership, Coopi-Guna, and the French ones, Gret-Danone, according to the research questions.

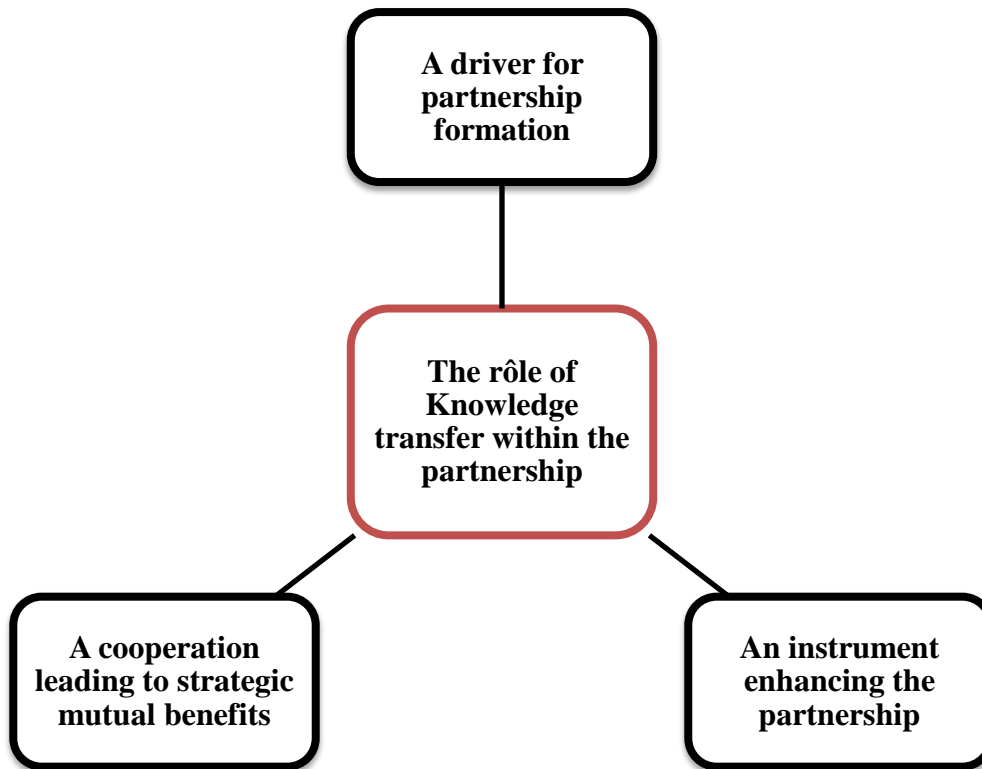
The chapter is structured in three parts. The first part gives an overview of the knowledge transfer process within the two partnerships. The second part analyses the findings related to each knowledge transfer variables identified in the methodology. For each variable, there is a table with the evidences, and a focus based on the similarities and differences of the French and the Italian partnerships.

The last part studies the overall impact of the knowledge transfer on the partnerships' success.

### **7.1 How did knowledge transfer operate throughout the partnership?**

The interviews have revealed that knowledge transfer has an important role within the partnership, going from the motivations for entering upon partnership until its outcome. The figure bellows, summarizes the three principal periods in which knowledge transfer operates.

Figure 10. How Knowledge transfer operates within the nonprofit-profit partnerships



### *7.1.1 Knowledge transfer: a driver for partnership creation*

The desire to increase organizational knowledge on a specific issue has been an important driver for the partnerships' formation.

For the Italian and the French partnerships, the complementarity of the core businesses of the respective two partners has reciprocally caught their attention towards the project.

For the Italian partnership, Coopì was interested in collaborating with a company specialized in homeopathic products, and Guna was particularly interested to act on the preservation of a precious ancient knowledge on medicinal plant.

For the French partnership, the willingness to create a social business for Gret, and to improve its social business model for Danone, were two issues converging: improving the social needs of the poorest social class.

More than linked core businesses, each partner have to find in the other the skills researched granting a better efficacy of the project.

Coopi needed a technical consultant partner able to support it on the commercialization phase, and for Guna, increasing its knowledge on medicinal plants and possibly offering new products was considered an organizational enrichment.

Gret required a marketing consultant partner and Danone wanted to improve its business model strategy for poor population target.

Thus, core businesses, skills complementarities were the drivers for the partnerships creation.

### ***7.1.2 Knowledge transfer: an instrument enhancing the partnership***

Throughout the partnerships, the knowledge transfer between the two partners has been an important element of the relation.

The mutual knowledge brought by the partners within the project, and their willingness to exchange it, have permitted to go beyond the initial expectations.

According to the Italian partnership, the commercialization phase was not initially predefined, but thanks to the good collaboration and their mutual skills, this part of the project has been created.

According to the French partnership, the professional analysis conducted by Danone, and the Gret's skills and knowledge on the local context, have drastically improved the initial 'babies restaurants' model and the 'Hotelin-Jazakely' product, and also prepared a solid base for the new social enterprise.

When the two actors can reciprocally express their skills and exchange their knowledge within the partnership, knowledge transfer becomes a noticeable driver enhancing the partners and their projects.

Being able to achieve their roles, according to their respective skills led to a continuous knowledge transfer resulting in a significant added value to the project.

### ***7.1.3 Knowledge transfer: a cooperation leading to mutual and strategic benefits***

The questionnaire asked the interviewees the question on the principal benefits received from the partnership. In the questionnaire, this point is called “usefulness of knowledge (benefits)”. It is an important variable of knowledge transfer and represents the overall usefulness of the knowledge received. The mutual benefits received from the collaboration are sizeable and are the result of an intense knowledge exchange between the partners.

The two Italian and French partners have provided sustainability and continuity to two strategic social projects resulting in long-term employments and health improvement.

With regard to their personal benefit, the knowledge acquired through the partnership, has been useful for the organization.

Coopi has benefited from a scientific and technical contribution on the medicine plants analyzes, and a commercial support in which the laboratory of Guna is a great resource. Guna has increased its organizational knowledge on medicinal plants, access to a new range of products, and enhance employee’s motivation.

Gret, has obtained significant professional consulting that allows to confirm and enhance their capacities, especially concerning the marketing and business plan areas.

Danone, has benefited from the accumulated knowledge of Gret concerning the poorer social class needs, and how to attract them.

The two partnerships have benefited from a high visibility, that impacts on their reputation and performance. Organizational performances can be illustrated by the deeper and strategically commitment towards CSR for the companies, and the professionalism to manage and provide sustainability to social projects for the nonprofits.

## 7.2 What is the impact of the knowledge transfer variables on the Italian and French partnerships?

This part studies the five elements of the knowledge transfer: knowledge transfer mechanisms, mutual trust, cultural alignment, organizational fit, and complementarity of resources.

For each knowledge transfer variable, are represented a) the main evidences of the four interviews, b) a comparison between the French and the Italian partnerships.

### 7.2.1 Knowledge transfer mechanisms: formal/informal

The four actors agree that formal and informal mechanisms can coexist together. The central outcome of the study is that whether the mechanisms and relationships are formal or informal, the two of them are associated with the good management of the partnerships.

#### Evidences

Table 11. The impact of knowledge transfer mechanisms within the nonprofit-profit partnerships

Coopi	Guna	Gret	Ex-Danone <sup>45</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Type of process: formal initial proposal and annual report</li> <li>✓ Evolution:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Type of process: formal initial proposal and annual report</li> <li>✓ Evolution: from formal to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Type of process: formal relation all through the partnership</li> <li>✓ Finding: formal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Type of process: formal relation throughout the partnership</li> <li>✓ Finding: the</li> </ul>

<sup>45</sup>Emilie Pleuvret is an ex-employee of Danone. She is currently Owner of Croissens, organization specialized in social business consulting.

from formal to informal relationship ✓ Finding: both formal and informal relations are needed	informal relationship ✓ Finding: informal relation has intensified the relation	relation is appropriated for this kind of partnership	importance is to enter upon relation with the partner according to the means preferred
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*Interpretation based on the Italian and French partnerships: Coopi-Guna and Gret-Danone*

There are important distinctions according to the knowledge transfer mechanisms used between the French and the Italian partnerships.

Concerning the Italian partnership, Coopi and Guna have experienced the two learning contexts: formal and informal. However, informal relationship has had a greatest importance than the formal one. Formal mechanisms between the two partners are represented by a formal initial proposal and formal annual reports. A frequent and spontaneous communication, informal meetings, personal phone calls, and additional invitations to extra events and meetings characterize informal mechanisms. Coopi and Guna have experienced an evolution in their relation, from formal to informal. This evolution is characterized by a better and frequent communication resulting in a much better and intensified collaboration. According to Coopi, informal relation is the intangible part of the relation, more difficult to establish, and that has led the project ahead. The informal relation within this partnership is not only at the origin of a successful collaboration, but also enables the project to go beyond its initial objectives. Thus for Coopi and Guna, the informal relation is the basis of their good relationship and collaboration. Easterby-Smith et al (2008), demonstrate that informal learning mechanism better alleviate cultural differences and help to manage distant location.

On the contrary, Gret and Danone have used formal mechanisms and have had a formal relationship. Reports and monitoring were regularly planned all three months.

The principal tools used to communicate were the action plan, face-to-face meetings, documents exchange and important written reports. There were frequent face-to-face exchanges characterized by common and reciprocal visits in Paris and in Madagascar. 'A close management' qualifies the overall monitoring of the collaboration. The formal learning context, especially through face-to-face mechanism, lead to good management of the partnership and facilitate the efficient transfer of knowledge amongst the partners as stated by Nonaka (1994), and Panjaitan and Noorderhaven (2008).

Formal and informal mechanisms have positively impacted on the partnership management and on the knowledge transfer. Formal mechanisms are associated to a better knowledge transfer, and informal mechanisms to better alleviate cultural differences and distant locations.

Two successful partnerships have used two different knowledge transfer mechanisms. This result reveals that it is not the mechanisms used per se that is fundamental, but the coherent mechanism related to the objectives of the partnership and the characteristics of the partners. For instance, the need to exchange knowledge for the French partnership, and the necessity to create strong ties for the Italian one, were respectively more important. Additionally both Danone and Gret are characterized as formal structures, more than Coopi and Guna. Thus, as Emilie Pleuvret expresses (ex-Danone), a compatible mechanism, formal or informal is appropriate for these partnerships.

### ***7.2.2 Mutual trust***

There are two identical elements for the four organizations concerning trust: a) the perception of trust as a pre-condition to enter upon partnership and b) the necessity to establish and preserve mutual trust during the partnership.



With respect to the pre-condition for trust, the four organizations similarly highlight the perception of transparency and commitment as principal criterion. Zaheer et al (2013) called this concept perception of trustworthiness among individuals and organizations. Mutual trust throughout the partnership has positively influenced the good knowledge transfer and the partnership management.

*Evidences*

Table 12. The impact of mutual trust represented within the nonprofit-profit partnerships

<b>Coopi</b>	<b>Guna</b>	<b>Gret</b>	<b>Ex-Danone<sup>46</sup></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Pre-conditions for trust: alignment with the guidelines, commitment to business ethics, environmental and social certifications are</li> <li>✓ Driver for trust: frequent communication and constant feedback</li> <li>✓ Finding: trust is the basis for a good collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Pre-conditions for trust: transparency, suggest clear and coherent action plan</li> <li>✓ Driver for trust: informal relation, frequent communication and mutual commitments</li> <li>✓ Finding: trust is fundamental in the relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Pre-conditions for trust: Similar ‘agenda’ and opinions</li> <li>✓ Driver for trust : formal agreement and commitment, clears roles and responsibilities</li> <li>✓ Finding: mutual trust is essential to move forward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Pre-conditions for trust: transparency and clear communication</li> <li>✓ Driver for trust: formal relation, transparency report, and partner support</li> <li>✓ Finding: mutual trust is essential to move forward</li> </ul>

<sup>46</sup>Emilie Pleuvret is an ex-employee of Danone. She is currently Owner of Croissens, organization specialized in social business consulting.

*Interpretation based on the Italian and French partnerships: Coopi-Guna and Gret-Danone*

There are divergences regarding the pre-conditions criterion to trust, and the way to establish trust within the partnership. Internal guidelines are the primary instrument used by the Italian partners to judge the trustworthiness of the partner.

For Coopi, respecting the criteria of the guidelines, and be committed towards CSR, are crucial. For Guna respecting the criteria of the guidelines, and putting forward to a project linked to its core business, are the main conditions. These elements have helped to establish a mutual pre-credibility leading to the conclusion of the agreement.

Afterwards, the instruments used to establish and preserve mutual trust have been frequent communication, constant feedback, and mutual commitment. The informal relation of the partners has positively enhanced trust. Cumming and Teng (2003) affirm that the stronger social ties between individuals lead to better knowledge sharing and trust development.

Instruments dedicated to the initial perception of trust were more empirical for the French partnership. Gret pays attention to the overall 'agenda' and opinions of the company that should be similar to the nonprofit organization ones. Danone looks to the global transparency and professionalism of its partner.

Afterwards, the trust has been established and preserved through the definition of clear roles and responsibilities, and the visible commitment towards the project. The formal mechanisms and relationships of the partners have been the driver for trust. The trust in skills and the formal design of the structure have influenced the knowledge transfer, as studied by Levin and Cross (2004) and Easterby-Smith et al (2008).

The case studies have revealed that the criteria for judging and preserving mutual trust were diverging amongst the partnerships. Italian partnership uses formal pre-conditions criteria, and then, adopts informal mechanisms and relationships. Whereas the French partnership starts with a more empirical approach and move towards a formal relationship. For the two cases, mutual trust remains one of the most

important variables for the collaboration, its success and the knowledge transfer success.

### 7.2.3 Cultural alignment

Cultural alignment is taken in account by the four organizations in the selecting process of the partner. Cultural alignment is considered an important element permitting to learn from the partner and is perceived as a condition for the success of the partnership.

The main finding rests upon the fact that the importance of cultural alignment is not the alignment between the two organizations' culture, but their alignment towards the project itself: its objectives, mission, values and vision. Indeed, the four organizations have expressed that the need is to share common values and have the same vision of the project. The main argument is that organizational cultural diversity is needed for these partnerships but the project needs to be totally shared to be successful.

#### Evidences

Table 13. The impact of cultural alignment within the nonprofit-profit partnerships

Coopi	Guna	Gret	Ex-Danone <sup>47</sup>
✓ The importance of cultural alignment: it is an important element when choosing the partner	✓ The importance of cultural alignment: it is a decisive factor when selecting the partner	✓ The importance of cultural alignment: it is an important issue in the upstream part of the selection	✓ The importance of cultural alignment: it is an important factor when selecting the partner

<sup>47</sup>Emilie Pleuvret is an Ex-employee of Danone. She is currently Owner of Croissens, organization specialized in social business consulting.

✓ Why it is important: convergences of values and vision on the project is crucial	✓ Why it is important: to have a common matrix in terms of values and cultural path	✓ Why it is important: sharing the same vision and values on the project is essential	✓ Why it is important: sharing the same societal mission and vision concerning the project is necessary
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*Interpretation based on the Italian and French partnerships: Coopi-Guna and Gret-Danone*

Concerning the Italian partnership, Coopi explains that cultural diversity is a factor enhancing the project achievement. The importance is put on the shared vision and values. Guna adds that it also permits to go beyond philanthropy and provides a real benefit to the project. The common vision and shared values towards the project have influenced the good relationship of the partners. Nieminem (2005) sustains that social ties amongst partners facilitate a better knowledge transfer.

Concerning the French partners, cultural conflicts have appeared during the partnership. However, the shared vision and values of the project have permitted to alleviate these conflicts. Danone highlights that having the same mission has facilitated the comprehension of the mutual interests and intentions of the partners, making the relation easier. Smith et al (2008) argue that different cultural background can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings. However, the alignment towards the project has helped to manage and alleviate these conflicts.

Thus, the case studies reveal that the importance of cultural alignment is not on the similarities between visions, values, behaviors, habits and communications of the

cultural organizations but towards the project itself. There is a need for organizational diversity to achieve the project. The cultural alignment on the project, through shared values and common vision of it, is necessary to manage the collaboration and experience a good knowledge transfer. Cultural alignment towards the project can help to alleviate sectorial cultural differences and facilitate trust amongst the partners.

#### **7.2.4 Organizational fit**

There was not a common structure created for the partnerships. In order to accomplish the project they have clearly defined the roles and responsibilities in the upstream part of the partnership. Organizational fit is a variable that has been less considered than cultural alignment, but the partners recognize the need of organizational fit to manage correctly the partnership.

#### *Evidences*

Table 14. The impact of organizational fit within the nonprofit-profit partnerships

<b>Coopi</b>	<b>Guna</b>	<b>Gret</b>	<b>Ex-Danone<sup>48</sup></b>
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<sup>48</sup>Emilie Pleuvret is an Ex-employee of Danone. She is currently Owner of Croissens, organization specialized in social business consulting.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Process used to formalize strategies: initial convention to stabilize roles, responsibilities, benefits, transparency and so on.</li> <li>✓ Type of form: not formal structure created</li> <li>✓ Finding: good organizational fit within the partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Process used to formalize strategies: initial convention to stabilize roles, responsibilities, benefits, transparency and so on.</li> <li>✓ Type of form: not formal structure created</li> <li>✓ Finding: fit between organizational management styles. It is needed to construct a project together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Process used to formalize strategies: important pilot phase to stabilize roles, responsibilities, benefits, transparency and so on.</li> <li>✓ Type of form: not common structure created but very formal roles</li> <li>✓ Finding: management styles were perfectly fitting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Process used to formalize strategies: important pilot phase to stabilize roles, responsibilities, benefits, transparency and so on.</li> <li>✓ Type of form: not common structure realized but very formal roles</li> <li>✓ Finding: management styles were mostly fitting</li> </ul>
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*Interpretation based on the Italian and French partnerships: Coopi-Guna and Gret-Danone*

Concerning the Italian partnership, organization fit seems a less important variable than cultural alignment. Coopi believes that nowadays there are not so much differences in terms of management styles. Guna, in accordance with Coopi, adds that in case of organizational style divergences, it can be alleviated thanks to cultural alignment. This statement is sustained by Heiman et al (2006) that demonstrate that resource complementarity between partners and cultural similarity tolerates poor fit.

Concerning the French partnership, Gret and Danone have given a greater importance to the structure of the project and its management. The two partners insist on the necessity to predefine in details all the elements of the partnership. They have experienced a long pilot phase, in which every single phase has been clarified. However, the divergences in term of communicational tools between the partners have created misunderstandings resulting in organizational conflicts. Thus, communication tools also need to fit or to be stabilized in the upstream part.

Thus, organizational fit is important to manage the partnership and avoid misunderstandings. Formalization of the structure through clear roles, responsibilities, and mechanisms are elements positively influencing knowledge transfer as stated by Easterby-Smith et al (2008).

#### ***7.2.5 Complementarity of resources***

The resources brought by the partners are considered complementary. This complementarity is the result of an important partner's selection according to the project and the partner's needs. All the actors agree to sustain that the complementarity of resources has permitted the good management of the relationship and helped to clearly define the roles and responsibilities.

*Evidences*

Table 15. The impact of resources complementarity within the nonprofit-profit partnerships

<b>Coopi</b>	<b>Guna</b>	<b>Gret</b>	<b>Ex-Danone<sup>49</sup></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Resources were complementary</li> <li>✓ Finding: the better the resources are complementary, the better the project management is.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Resources were complementary</li> <li>✓ Finding: it is important that each partner brings its own knowledge within the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Resources were complementary</li> <li>✓ Finding: it is determinant for the good collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Resources were complementary</li> <li>✓ Finding: complementarity is the base of a good partnership</li> </ul>

*Interpretation based on the Italian and French partnerships: Coopi-Guna and Gret-Danone*

There are no relevant differences between The French and the Italian partnership. Complementarity of resources has been a decisive factor for the knowledge transfer and the success of the project.

Complementarity of resources has helped to define roles and responsibilities. Trust in the partner skills has developed reciprocal confidence, resulting in a better knowledge transfer. The French and Italian partners were confident in getting advices from a professional in the field. Levin and Cross (2004) show that trust in skills, passing through good complementary expertise, improve the bond between individuals, and impacts on the knowledge transfer performance.

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<sup>49</sup>Emilie Pleuvret is an Ex-employee of Danone. She is currently Owner of Croissens, organization specialized in social business consulting.



The complementarity of resources is the result of the skills complementarity. Dahan, (2009), illustrates this concept arguing that nonprofit organizations and companies can offer missing capabilities to complete each other's business models, or even co-create new and innovative projects.

The case studies reveal that mutual trust is the main condition for knowledge transfer. Knowledge transfer mechanisms, cultural alignment, organizational fit and resources complementarity influence the mutual trust amongst the partners that determine the overall knowledge transfer success. The main difference between the two partnerships is the knowledge transfer mechanism adopted.

The Italian partnership adopted an informal mechanism. The communication style is the best illustration of their informality. The frequent, spontaneous, and personal communication has affected their social ties and, reinforced their mutual understandings. Strong social ties and mutual understandings are two important indicators of mutual trust leading to better knowledge sharing.

The French partnership adopted a formal mechanism. The formality was present in all the phases of the partnership, a) a long pilot phase to clearly define the mutual roles and responsibilities, b) regular and planned monitoring and face-to-face reports during the partnership c) a final written report to end up the analysis. The formal relationship affected the level of the mutual interests' comprehension, resulting in reinforcing the mutual trust, especially through the trust in skills and professionalism. The formal design of the partnership and the mutual trust lead to better knowledge transfer.

Formal and informal mechanisms are not contradictory. The importance is on the global fit of the two partners, independently from best practices, and their capacity to adapt to each other.

The following table summarizes the main findings of the Italian and the French case studies:

Table 16. Summary of the characteristics for the two partnerships

Variables	Coopi-Guna	Gret- Ex-Danone <sup>50</sup>
<b>Knowledge transfer mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mechanisms used: informal mechanisms and relation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Frequent and spontaneous communication</li> <li>⇒ Facilitate cultural understandings and distant location management</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Evolution: from formal to informal               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Result in a better communication</li> <li>⇒ Increase social ties</li> <li>⇒ Facilitate mutual trust</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mechanisms used: formal mechanisms and relation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Regular and formal communication</li> <li>⇒ Face to Face mechanism: one of the most suitable instrument for knowledge transfer</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Evolution : it remains formal               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ The formal partnership has been appropriated</li> <li>⇒ Facilitate mutual trust</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<sup>50</sup>Emilie Pleuvret is an Ex-employee of Danone. She is currently Owner of Croissens, organization specialized in social business consulting.

<p><b>Mutual Trust</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What is important: pre-conditions to trust and mutual trust throughout the partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Pre-condition: alignment with guidelines</li> <li>⇒ Driver for mutual trust: informal relation</li> <li>⇒ Importance of social ties</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Determinant variables for mutual trust: transparency and commitment towards the project</li> <li>✓ Trust is a crucial condition for the good collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Facilitate knowledge transfer</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What is important: pre-condition to trust and mutual trust throughout the partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Pre-condition: alignment with agenda and opinions</li> <li>⇒ Driver for mutual trust: formal relation</li> <li>⇒ Importance of clear roles and responsibilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Determinant variables for mutual trust: transparency and commitment towards the project</li> <li>✓ Trust is a condition for the good collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Facilitate knowledge transfer</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Cultural alignment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What is important: vision and values alignment towards the project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Create social ties</li> <li>⇒ Facilitate the collaboration management</li> <li>⇒ Impact on mutual trust</li> <li>⇒ Facilitate knowledge transfer</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What is important: vision and values alignment towards the project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Alleviate cultural conflicts</li> <li>⇒ Facilitate the comprehension of the mutual intentions</li> <li>⇒ Impact on mutual trust</li> <li>⇒ Facilitate knowledge transfer</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Organizational Fit</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Organizations were totally fitting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Permit a good communication and collaboration</li> <li>⇒ Facilitate knowledge transfer</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Level of importance: element not so decisive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Organizations were mostly fitting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Problems of communication and management tools</li> <li>⇒ Hinder knowledge transfer</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Level of importance: important</li> <li>✓ Process: long pilot phase to clarify roles and</li> </ul>

	✓ Process: initial convention but organizations were generally naturally fitting	responsibilities
<b>Resources complementarity</b>	✓ Resources greatly complementary ⇒ Lead to trust in skills ⇒ Permit a good collaboration ⇒ Facilitate knowledge transfer	✓ Resources greatly complementary ⇒ Lead to trust in skills ⇒ Permit a good collaboration ⇒ Facilitate knowledge transfer

### 7.3 What is the overall impact of knowledge transfer on partnership success?

This part analyzes the overall impact of the knowledge transfer on the success of the partnership. During the interviews, it has been asked to the interviewees to identify the key factors for the success of the partnership. Based on the results I have elaborated a classification of these key factors, in order to observe the influence of the knowledge transfer.

#### 7.3.1 *The weight of knowledge transfer variables on partnerships' success*

The following table represents the three principal variables for success identified by the four organizations, in an ascending order.

Table 17. The most important variables for the success of the partnership

<b>Coopi</b>	<b>Guna</b>	<b>Gret</b>	<b>Ex- Ex-Danone<sup>51</sup></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Convergence of values and vision of the project</li> <li>2. Mutual trust</li> <li>3. Skills complementarity</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Convergence of values and vision of the project</li> <li>2. Cultural and organizational resemblance</li> <li>3. Mutual trust</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mutual listening</li> <li>2. Mutual respect</li> <li>3. Formal mechanism</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Convergence of values and vision of the project</li> <li>2. Mutual trust and esteem a priori</li> <li>3. Mutual respect</li> </ol>

Concerning the Italian partnership, the three variables are associated to knowledge transfer. The most important and common factor is cultural alignment towards the project. Thus, cultural alignment, mutual trust, organizational fit, and skills complementarity are the key variables for success for this partnership, and confirm the role and influence of knowledge transfer on the overall partnership.

Concerning the French partnership, there is a mix between knowledge transfer variables and other ones. The elements associated to knowledge transfer are cultural alignment towards the project, mutual trust and formal mechanism. The other variables are the mutual listening and the mutual respect. Mutual respect is a key factor for the two partners and denotes the respect of the identity and the nature of the organization. For instance, Gret has respected the professionalism of Danone and Danone has respected the social commitment of Gret. Gret also identifies the importance of the mutual listening before starting the relationship as the key factor for success. Thus, knowledge transfer is a key element for the success of the partnership.

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<sup>51</sup>Emilie Pleuvret is an Ex-employee of Danone. She is currently Owner of Croissens, organization specialized in social business consulting.

Cultural alignment, through shared values and common vision of the project, together with mutual trust, are the most cited elements. These factors are facilitators of knowledge transfer that are also an explanation of the partnerships success.

## 8. Discussion and conclusions

The societal challenges are too complex to be solved by any single entity or sector (*Wagner, 2011*), and cross-sector partnerships consequently turned out to be innovative types of relationship to face these challenges (*Wesbrod, 2011*). Non-for-profit and for-profit partnerships are constantly increasing and considering one of the most opportunistic instruments to tackle and answer social needs (*Coordination Sud, Medef, 2010*). Their sectorial complementarity and convergence of interests result in arousing the desire to acquire the knowledge and skills of their partner. Knowledge transfer is a critical source and resource able to improve organizational performance (*Van Wijk et al. 2008*), and is therefore one main driver for the partnerships formation (*Becerra et al 2008*).

The objective of the thesis was to explore the impact of knowledge transfer on the non-for-profit and for-profit partnerships and its effect on performance. The interviews conducted allowed to construct two case studies, which provided answers to the three research questions and revealed interesting conclusions.

### **RQ1. How does knowledge transfer impact on nonprofit-profit partnerships?**

The findings show the decisive and pervasive role of the knowledge transfer on the two partnerships Coopi-Guna and Gret-Danone.

These findings reinforce the current view on the social impact and the innovative character of the partnerships. Indeed, the combination of skills driven by their sectorial complementarity has permitted the creation of innovative social projects. The mutual

benefits received from the partners express the strategic impact of knowledge transfer on organizational performances.

**RQ2. Are there any differences related to the French and Italian partnerships?**

The analysis of the five variables highlights that mutual trust is the main enabler for knowledge transfer for the two partnerships.

The major difference of the case studies lies in the knowledge transfer mechanism adopted by the two partnerships and its impacts on trust.

- a) The Italian partnership adopted an informal mechanism. It results in intensifying social ties amongst the partners that strengthened mutual trust. The mutual trust enhances the partnership and leads to a better knowledge sharing.
- b) The French partnership adopted a formal mechanism. The overall partnership was formalized through clear roles and responsibilities, planned reports and face-to-face monitoring. The formal structure strengthened mutual trust, leading to a better knowledge sharing.

It is interesting to observe that two different mechanisms, within two successful partnerships, have both facilitated trust and led to a better knowledge transfer. Therefore, it is not the formal or informal mechanism the most relevant for knowledge transfer, but the use of the coherent mechanism for the partners. To ensure a good collaboration, leading to mutual trust and better knowledge sharing, the global fit and compatibility amongst the partners' organizations is necessary. Some recommendations to ensure the global fit amongst the partners are a) to choose a partner having similar characteristics in terms of communication and management, b) to be able to adapt to each other and seek for coherent and common solutions, c) to carefully consider all the variables when entering upon partnerships in order to avoid organizational conflicts that could hinder the knowledge transfer.

**RQ3. Which knowledge transfer variables have a major impact on the partnerships' performance?**

Knowledge transfer within the two partnerships has been a key factor leading to partnership success. Knowledge transfer is consequently a driver for partnership performance. Particularly, the two most important variables evidenced by the partners



are a) mutual trust and b) cultural alignment towards the project. The importance of mutual trust revealed by the first analysis and its strategic influence are confirmed. The notion of cultural alignment is an interesting point of the findings. Since the need is to share the value and the mission of the project, organizational cultural diversity is therefore an important element to take into account. The hostility amongst the two sectors has been due for a long time to their opposite nature, culture, and objectives, but these differences are now drawing their mutual attention and at the origin of their performance. The sectors are not different anymore, they are complementary.

The case studies development has permitted to gain insights and understand the knowledge transfer dynamics within the partnerships. These partnerships have been strategic instruments to develop innovative social projects, and knowledge transfer has been their driver. Since only two partnerships have been analyzed, the interviews conducted with the four organizations are not sufficient to generalize the conclusions on the impact of knowledge transfer on the overall profit-nonprofit partnerships. In order to test the validity and reliability of the findings, further researches should include a quantitative approach with a larger sample including several types of partnerships. It could also be interesting to extend the results to France and Italy by conducting a larger qualitative or/and additional quantitative research to a large national sample. It could perhaps permit to explain current situation and highlight best practices.

The evidences from the interviews have additionally highlighted that for-profit and non-profit partnerships should continue to get in importance due to their increasing convergence of interests and their ability to provide sustainability to the social projects. Indeed, the nonprofit organizations want to propose the cheapest-quality product to the largest number of individuals, and the companies are interesting in targeting the poor social class. Even more importantly, these partnerships represent one of the best ways to provide sustainability and profitability to the social projects conducted. For a long time, people has thought that to solve social needs, the community or the nonprofit organizations should give their support to the poorer individuals. Nowadays we realized that there are real issues of sustainability. The creation of social business, applying commercial strategies to maximize improvements in human and environment welfare, is

one of the future mean to fight against inequalities and solve the sustainability challenges. These organizations need the technical support from the companies and the accumulated knowledge of the nonprofit on local social needs to be efficient.

Thus, the thesis confirms that knowledge transfer is one of the main drivers for the non-for-profit and for-profit partnerships, and its role should intensify. Knowledge transfer within these partnerships is a key factor increasing their performances. Further researches should draw their attention on the instruments and methods needed to ensure knowledge transfer and permit to maximize the partnerships performance.

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## Appendix I. English version of the questionnaire

### **PART I: BASIC INFORMATIONS**

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#### **INTRODUCTIVE QUESTION**

3. Could you please tell us about yourself and your career path in the 'O'<sup>52</sup> ?

#### **PARTNERSHIP PROFILE**

4. Could you tell me about the project 'X'<sup>53</sup>?
5. What was your specific role in this project?

#### **PARTNERSHIP CREATION**

6. What were the initial motivations to do a partnership with an enterprise/NGO for this project?
7. Why with 'P'<sup>54</sup>?
8. Did 'O' previously worked with P?
  - o If yes, do you believe your previous relation with 'P' had positively influenced the partnership success?

### **PART II: VARIABLES OF INTER-KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND THEIR IMPACTS ON THE PROJECT OUTCOME**

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#### **CULTURAL ALIGNMENT**

9. Which factors do you consider relevant when choosing your partner?
  - o Do you think the choice of the right partner has an impact on the success of the partnership?
10. Do you think that cultural alignment between the two organizations is important?

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL FIT**

11. Does the organization of the partnership have fit to challenge cultural differences?
12. Did the partnership organization affect design, power repartition, and harmony in the top management team's decision-making processes?

#### **COMPLEMENTARITY OF RESOURCES**

13. What were the specific resources bring by the partners for the project? (*Financial, knowledge, skills, human, network and so on*).
- 

<sup>52</sup> 'O' stands for the organization interviewed

<sup>53</sup> 'X' stands for the specific project studied

<sup>54</sup> 'P' stands for the partner organization

14. Do you consider that 'O' and 'P' have brought the same level of resources (*not just financial*)
  - Were the resources complementary?
15. Do you think that there is a correlation between complementarity of the partners' resources and the project management?

#### **KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER MECHANISMS: FORMAL/INFORMAL**

16. What were the principal tools used to communicate and plan? (*Mail, face-to-face, joint team and so on*) and the frequency of communication?
17. Would you qualify the partnership's relation formal or informal?
  - If changes have been observe, do you think this evolution has brought more success?
  - If no changes have been observe, do you think a formal/informal relationship could influence the good partnership management?

#### **MUTUAL TRUST**

18. On which bases could you qualify a partner trustful?
  - Is 'P' in line with this criterion?
19. Did you perceive an evolution of the level of trust along the relation?
  - If the answer is yes, according to which factors?
20. According to your opinion, has trust (or the lack it) between partners, facilitated (impeded) the outcome of the project?
21. What are according to your experience the best ways to establish trust?

#### **USEFULNESS OF KNOWLEDGE (BENEFITS)**

22. If we consider the project an example of successful collaboration. Could tell me, according to your opinion, what are the main benefits reached by 'O' and 'P'? And for this specific project?

### **PART III: THE KEY VARIABLE(S) FOR SUCCESS**

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#### **MOST IMPORTANT VARIABLES FOR COLLABORATION SUCCESS**

23. To end with the questionnaire, could you tell me which factors do you really consider essentials to guarantee the success of the collaboration and its project?
  - Are there any variables we did not mentioned that are also important for a good collaboration?

#### **CONCLUSIVE QUESTION**

24. How do you perceive the collaboration between companies and NGOs and its evolution in the future?

## Appendix II. French version of the questionnaire

### **PARTIE I: INFORMATIONS ESSENTIELLES**

---

#### **QUESTION INTRODUCTIVE**

1. Pouvez-vous vous présenter et expliquer votre parcours professionnel au sein de 'O'<sup>55</sup>?

#### **PROFILE DU PARTENARIAT**

2. Pouvez-vous me décrire les grandes lignes du projet Nutrimad, Madagascar?
3. Quel a été votre rôle spécifique au sein du projet?

#### **CREATION DU PARTENARIAT**

4. Quelles ont été les motivations initiales qui ont poussées le 'O' à faire un partenariat d'entreprise/ONG pour ce projet?
5. Pourquoi 'P'<sup>56</sup>?
6. 'O' et 'P' ont-ils déjà collaborés ensemble?
  - o Si oui, pensez-vous que la relation antérieure ait influencé le succès de la collaboration?

### **PARTIE II: LES VARIABLES DU TRANSFER DE CONNAISSANCES INTERSECTORIEL ET LEURS IMPACTS SUR LE PARTENARIAT**

---

#### **ALIGNEMENT CULTUREL**

7. Quels facteurs considérez-vous pertinents en ce qui concerne le choix de votre partenaire?
  - o Pensez-vous que la sélection du partenaire ait un impact direct concernant le succès du partenariat?
8. Pensez-vous que la comptabilité culturelle entre les deux organisations soit importante?

#### **COMPTABILITE ORGANISATIONNELLE**

9. La comptabilité organisationnelle des partenaires a-t-elle permit de faire face aux différences culturelles?
10. la forme organisationnelle du partenariat a-t-elle impactée sur le design, la répartition des pouvoirs et apporter harmonie concernant la prise de décisions du top management?

#### **COMPLEMENTARITE DE RESSOURCES**

---

<sup>55</sup> 'O' indique l'organisation interviewée

<sup>56</sup> 'P' indique l'entreprise partenaire

11. Quelles sont les ressources spécifique apportées par chacun des partenaires? (*économiques, connaissances, compétences, humaines, network...*)
12. Considérez-vous que 'O' et 'P' aient apporté la même qualité de ressources?
  - Les considérez-vous complémentaires?
13. Pensez-vous qu'il existe une corrélation entre la complémentarité des ressources des partenaires et la bonne gestion du projet?

#### **MECANISMES DE TRANSFERT DE CONNAISSANCES: FORMEL/INFORMEL**

14. Quelles ont été les principaux instruments utilisés pour communiquer et planifier? (*mail, face à face, team commune...*) et leur fréquence?
15. Qualifieriez-vous la relation de formelle, informelle, ou les deux?
  - S'il y a eu un changement dans la relation: pensez-vous que ce changement ait entraîné plus de succès?
  - S'il n'y a pas eu de changement dans la relation: pensez-vous qu'une relation formelle ou informelle soit plus adaptée pour ce type de partenariat?

#### **CONFIANCE MUTUELLE**

16. Quels éléments vous permettent de qualifier un partenaire digne de confiance?
  - 'P' fait-il partie de ses critères?
17. Y a-t-il eu une évolution concernant le niveau de confiance au long de la relation?
  - Si la réponse est oui: due à quels facteurs?
18. Selon votre opinion, la confiance (méfiance) entre les partenaires, a-t-elle facilitée (freinée) le bon déroulement du partenariat?
19. Quels sont selon votre expérience, les facteurs clés afin d'établir un rapport de confiance?

#### **UTILITE DE LA CONNAISSANCE (BENEFICES)**

20. En considérant ce projet un exemple de collaboration réussie. Pouvez-vous me décrire les principaux bénéfices que la collaboration apporté au 'O'? à 'P'? et les principaux bénéfices apportés au projet?

### **PARTIE III: LES VARIABLES CLES DE SUCCES**

---

#### **LES VARIABLES CLES AFIN DE GARANTIR UNE COLLABORATION REUSSIE**

21. Quels sont les principaux facteurs que vous considérez réellement essentiels concernant le succès d'une collaboration? et le succès de ce projet précis?
  - Voyez-vous d'autre éléments différents de ceux qui n'ont pas été cite jusqu'à présent?

#### **QUESTION CONCLUSIVE**

22. Comment percevez-vous l'évolution des collaborations entre l'entreprise et l'ONG?



## Appendix III. Italian version of the questionnaire

### **PARTE I: INFORMAZIONE ELEMENTARE**

---

#### **DOMANDA INTRODUTTIVA**

1. Innanzitutto, potrebbe presentarsi e descrivere il suo percorso professionale all'interno di 'O'<sup>57</sup>?

#### **PROFILO DELLA PARTNERSHIP**

2. Può parlarmi del progetto "*Medicina interculturale in Paraguay: opportunità d'integrazione socioeconomica per i giovani indigeni*"?
3. Qual era il suo ruolo nel progetto?

#### **CREAZIONE DELLA PARTNERSHIP**

4. Quale motivazione iniziale vi hanno condotto a fare una partnership aziendale?
5. Perché proprio con 'P'<sup>58</sup>?
6. 'O' e 'P' hanno già collaborato insieme precedentemente?
  - Se la risposta è sì. Lei crede che la relazione anteriore con 'P' abbia influenzato il successo della partnership?

### **PARTE II: VARIABILI DEL INTER KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER E LE LORO IMPATTO SUL SUCCESSO DEL PROGETTO**

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#### **ALLINEAMENTO CULTURALE**

7. Quali fattori reputa essere rilevanti nella scelta del partner?
  - Lei crede che la scelta del partner giusto abbia un impatto concreto sul successo della partnership?
8. Lei pensa che l'allineamento culturale tra le due aziende sia importante?

#### **COMPATIBILITÀ ORGANIZZATIVA**

9. La compatibilità organizzativa della partnership è stata adeguata per affrontare le differenze aziendali?
10. La forma strutturale della partnership ha avuto impatto sul design, distribuzione del potere, e armonia per quanto riguarda il processo di decisione del top management?

#### **COMPLEMENTARITÀ DELLE RISORSE**

---

<sup>57</sup> 'O' indica l'organizzazione intervistata

<sup>58</sup> 'P' indica l'organizzazione partner

11. Quale risorsa sono state apportate dai partner per il progetto? (*finanziare conoscenza, competenza, umane, rete di relazioni...*)
12. Lei considera che 'O' e 'P' abbiano portato lo stesso livello di risorse?
  - Lei le considera complementari?
13. Lei crede che esista una correlazione tra la complementarità delle risorse dei partner e la gestione del progetto?

#### **MECCANISMI: FORMALE/INFORMALE**

14. Che strumenti sono stati utilizzati in termini di comunicazione e pianificazione? (*mail, faccia-a-faccia, team comune...*) e la loro frequenza?
15. Secondo lei la relazione tra i due partner è stata formale o informale?
  - Se è stata osservata un'evoluzione: lei pensa che questa evoluzione abbia incrementato il successo della partnership?
  - Se non stata osservata un'evoluzione: lei crede che una relazione formale/informale possa influire sulle buone gestioni del progetto?

#### **FIDUCIA**

16. Come definirebbe un partner degno di fiducia?
  - 'P' rientra in questi criteri?
17. E' stata osservata un'evoluzione del livello di fiducia durante la collaborazione?
  - Se la risposta è sì: secondo che fattori?
18. Secondo la sua opinione, la fiducia (non fiducia) tra i partner, facilita (ostacola) il successo del *partnership*?
19. Quali sono secondo le sue esperienze i fattori essenziali per costruire un rapporto di fiducia?

#### **UTILITÀ DELLA KNOWLEDGE (BENEFICI)**

20. Considerando il progetto come un esempio di collaborazione di successo, quali sono i benefici principali derivati dalla collaborazione per 'P' e 'O'? E per questo progetto in specifico?

### **PARTE III: VARIABILI CHIAVE DEL SUCCESSO**

---

#### **VARIABILI LE PIÙ IMPORTANTI PER IL SUCCESSO DELLA PARTNERSHIP**

21. Per terminare, potrebbe indicarmi i fattori che ritiene davvero essenziali per il successo di una collaborazione?
  - Lei pensa ad altre variabile importante che non abbiamo citato?

#### **DOMANDA CONCLUSIVA**

22. Come crede che si evolverà la collaborazione tra NGO e aziende nel prossimo future?

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