

LIVING UP TO THEIR BILLING? TRANSNATIONAL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE 2030 AGENDA

Melina Nitschker

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the
degree of Master of Arts in Transnational Governance of the
European University Institute

Florence, 15 May 2022

European University Institute
School of Transnational Governance

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ABSTRACT

To achieve the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations has identified transnational partnerships as necessary tools. The aim of this work is to highlight how these partnerships have performed since the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, and to what extent such partnerships make valuable contributions to achieving the SDGs.

In order to do so, I have focused my research on three case studies: Gavi, the Global Partnership for Education, and the Forest Stewardship Council. By applying a scholarly framework to measure efficacy, and integrating expert interviews, this thesis measures the success of these transnational partnerships, and how their work facilitates the achievement of the SDGs.

Out of the three case studies, Gavi emerges as the most effective, with the other two partnerships currently being inadequate in dealing with the crises of the modern world, indicating that certain structural characteristics define the success of a partnership.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
COVAX	COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EFA – FTI	Education for All – Fast Track Initiative
ESP	Education Sector Plan
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPPN	Global Public Policy Network
GRPP	Global and Regional Policy Partnership
IAVI	International AIDS Vaccine Initiative
IFFIm	International Finance Facility for Immunization
IO	International Organization
LEG	Local Education Groups
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MSI	Multi-Stakeholder Initiative
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TAN	Transnational Advocacy Network
TGI	Transnational Public-Private Governance Initiative
TGN	Trans-Governmental Network
TPPP	Transnational Public-Private Partnership
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WCD	World Commission on Dams
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

If you can bring people with incompatible positions together and align them through independent actors, then you can manage to work together successfully for the common good. I would even go so far as to say that these partnerships can provide a template for solving many complex issues in today's world.

–José Manuel Barroso¹

In 2015, all 193 countries of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which succeeded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the early 2000s. The 2030 Agenda, a “plan of action for people, planet and prosperity,”² comprises seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and specific targets for each goal. The United Nations (UN) pledged to eradicate hunger and poverty, and to promote, among other things, education, gender equality, sustainable energy, economic growth, climate action, peace, and justice through the SDGs, making the 2030 Agenda a vital tool for humanity and the planet.³

Transnational Public-Private Partnerships (TPPPs) have become an essential part of the implementation of all goals, as both the public and private sectors have committed to the SDGs, implying an increase in investment in both sectors. Many companies are already investing heavily in new technologies and innovations to work toward a more sustainable future. With the increasing public interest in sustainability and the increase of mandatory reporting through so-called sustainability reports, incentives for change are being created. As producers and drivers of research and development, the private sector plays a crucial part in achieving the SDGs. However, achieving them will require systemic change and public sector support, as well as transnational policy efforts to create the right framework and incentives and address market failures.⁴ Hence, TPPPs can be found in a wide range of topic areas such as health, sustainable energy, or water and sanitation. Some classic examples for Transnational Public-Private

¹ José Manuel Barroso (Gavi Board Chair), in discussion with author, April 2022.

² UN General Assembly, Resolution 70/1, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, p. 1 (Sept. 25, 2015), <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>.

³ UN General Assembly, A/RES/70/1, p. 3.

⁴ Nannan Wang and Minxun Ma, “Public-Private Partnership as a Tool for Sustainable Development – What Literatures Say?,” *Sustainable Development* 29, no. 1 (2020): 243, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/sd.2127>.

Partnerships include Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; Fairtrade International; and The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (commonly known as The Global Fund).

SDG 17, which works to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development,”⁵ is explicitly designed to intensify partnerships to work together on achieving the goals. This research project focuses on Goal 17 and addresses how this goal is pursued through a particular institutional mechanism, Transnational Public Private Partnerships. Given that half of the timeframe allotted for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has passed, I seek to assess the current state of affairs surrounding the implementation of the targets. The guiding question will be: to what extent do TPPPs and other multi-stakeholder models facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals generally, and Goal 17 specifically?

The quarterly magazine of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) emphasizes the need for collaboration: “Indeed, the implementation of the SDGs requires partnerships with a strong country ownership and the alignment of inclusive and sustainable growth policies, public and private investments and societal goals.”⁶

Based on this, I have hypothesized the following: first, transnational partnerships with stakeholders from different sectors are essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and second, by pooling resources, synergies can be created, and thus barriers to implementation can be overcome.⁷

The chapters of this thesis shed light on the effectiveness of TPPPs in achieving the SDGs by examining three case studies and their contribution to the targets of the SDGs they are addressing. At the beginning of my research, I started out thinking that all three case studies fit the model of Transnational Public-Private Partnerships; however, as the research progressed, it has become apparent that the partnerships are more nuanced and differ in terms of visibility, budget, recognition, and objectives. In particular, my third case study, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), does not completely fit the model of Transnational Public-Private Partnerships because while it collaborates with the public sector, the public sector is not a direct stakeholder

⁵ UN General Assembly, A/RES/70/1, 14.

⁶ UN Industrial Development Organization, “Partnering for Impact: Achieving the SDGs,” *Making It: Industry for Development* (Nov. 28, 2017), p. 3, <https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2017-11/MakingIt-25-web.pdf>.

⁷ Peter Laugharn, “Report Calls for Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to Accelerate SDGs,” *Philanthropy News Digest* (PND), *Candid* (March 2, 2020), <https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/news/report-calls-for-multi-stakeholder-partnerships-to-accelerate-sdgs>.

within the partnership. For this reason, the analysis and discussion will explicitly address how the effectiveness of the partnership and its success in achieving the 2030 Agenda differs between TPPPs and other multi-stakeholder models.

The second chapter reviews the literature on TPPPs, the positive and negative evaluations, and general approaches to effectiveness research, and then discusses their relevance to the SDGs and Goal 17 in particular. From the developed theoretical framework, I will then utilize the conditions for success published by Philipp Pattberg and Oscar Widerberg, given that they depict whether TPPPs can make a valuable contribution as an institutional mechanism. The third chapter describes the methodology used for this thesis. Findings are obtained through a mixed-methods approach that derives from the theoretical framework and is best suited to analytically assess the hypotheses. The research tools are a mix of desk research and expert interviews. In this way, the success of TPPPs in helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals can be measured and quantified. These results can be viewed through the cases of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; the Global Partnership for Education; and the Forest Stewardship Council. The analysis in the fourth chapter is structured to examine whether these empirical cases are successful partnerships in general and whether they contribute to the SDGs in particular. There is a significant paucity of evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of TPPPs. My findings will be summarized in the fifth chapter

This project seeks to fill the gaps in research by conducting a thorough literature review on Transnational Public-Private Partnerships and by improving knowledge of what these mechanisms are. This will be done by consulting scholarly publications, media reports, and intergovernmental documents. In addition, this paper provides an overview of the landscape of types of TPPPs and demonstrates how SDG 17 relates to the other SDGs and whether it has lived up to expectations in terms of partnerships. This study is novel because it does not only look at the effectiveness of the partnership model but also combines it with the assessment of their contribution to the SDGs.

2. The State of Research on Transnational Public-Private Partnerships

As globalization continues to advance, new and innovative forms of governance are becoming increasingly necessary to address the challenges of a closely interconnected world. In recent decades, Transnational Public-Private Partnerships have gone from being a groundbreaking rarity to an established and much-used governance tool, especially in the realm of development aid. TPPPs are distinct from traditional institutions because they represent cooperation between the public and private sectors. The actors within such partnerships come from governments, international organizations, private businesses, and civil society. Thus, as actors in multilateral governance, TPPPs are innovative in that they unite states with non-state actors, and pool resources and expertise among different stakeholders to pursue a public purpose, which legitimizes them as a form of governance.⁸

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of the nature of TPPPs, the different types, relevant actors, modus operandi, and functions and capacity to influence by placing them in the context of the current literature on the subject.

Many scholars employ the definition given by Marco Schäferhoff focusing on the provision of collective goods, which would not encompass all TPPPs analyzed in this paper as some of them embody other types of TPPPs that have different functions such as standard-setting. In view of this, I will be using the definition presented by the United Nations, because it better describes all sorts of different types of TPPPs.⁹ The UN defines partnerships as “voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits.”¹⁰ This voluntary and non-binding nature sets TPPPs apart from international organizations as they are not part of any formal international agreement.

⁸ Liliana B. Andonova, *Governance Entrepreneurs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 7.

⁹ Marco Schäferhoff, Sabine Campe, and Christopher Kaan, “Transnational Public-Private Partnerships in International Relations: Making Sense of Concepts, Research Frameworks, and Results,” *International Studies Review* 11, no. 3 (2009): 455, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40389138>.

¹⁰ UN General Assembly, Resolution 70/224, Towards Global Partnerships: A Principle-Based Approach to Enhanced Cooperation Between the United Nations and All Relevant Partners, A/RES/70/224, p. 4 (Feb. 23, 2016), <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/224>.

2.1. Denotation, Emergence, and Development

There remains controversy and contradiction as to which TPPP was the first of its kind to emerge. This comes as no surprise, because it is not easy to determine what exactly a TPPP is, as there are many different types of partnerships at the global level that are similar to TPPPs but are structured differently and pursue different objectives. TPPPs themselves also encompass a wide spectrum of interactions between public and private bodies and therefore do not fit into any single schema. These partnerships form still a rather young subject area, and no universal definition or terminology has (yet) been established. Scholars and institutions use the term they find most suitable, most of which are used to describe the same phenomenon.

The most common terminology includes: ‘transnational public-private partnership,’¹¹ which is commonly used in scholarly literature; ‘Global Public Policy Network’ (GPPN), which likewise describes a tri-sectoral alliance with a shared problem and interest delivering a public policy;¹² ‘global and regional policy partnership’ (GRPP), the preferred acronym of the World Bank Group;¹³ and ‘multi-stakeholder partnership’¹⁴ which is used by the United Nations. Other terms include ‘global partnerships,’¹⁵ ‘cross-sector collaboration,’ ‘collective action,’¹⁶ or ‘policy network.’¹⁷ Still others are sub-groups of TPPPs, such as the Transnational Public-Private Governance Initiative (TGI), in which private actors are actively involved in the decision-making and enforcement processes that influence the behavior of governments and international institutions.¹⁸

With other terminology, it is more difficult to discern whether they can be classified as TPPPs. These terms describe related phenomena, but differ from TPPPs; for instance, ‘trans-

¹¹ Schäferhoff et al., “Transnational Public-Private Partnerships in International Relations,” 451.

¹² Diane Stone, *Knowledge Actors and Transnational Governance: The Private-Public Policy Nexus in the Global Agora* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 5.

¹³ Diane Stone, *Making Global Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 28.

¹⁴ Wade Hoxtell, “Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships and the 2030 Agenda: Challenges and Options for Oversight at the United Nations,” *Global Public Policy Institute*, March 2017, p. 7, http://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2017/Hoxtell__2017__Multi-Stakeholder_Partnerships_and_the_2030_Agenda.pdf.

¹⁵ Andonova, *Governance Entrepreneurs*, 1.

¹⁶ Darian Stibbe and Dave Prescott, *An Introduction to Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships*, Oxford: The Partnering Initiative, 2016, <https://www.thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Introduction-to-MSPs-Briefing-paper.pdf>.

¹⁷ Benedicte Bull, “Public-Private Partnerships: The United Nations Experience,” in *International Handbook on Public-Private Partnerships*, ed. Graeme A. Hodge, Carsten Greve, and Anthony E. Boardman (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2010), 480.

¹⁸ Oliver Westerwinter, “Transnational Public-Private Governance Initiatives in World Politics: Introducing a New Dataset,” *The Review of International Organizations* 16 (2021): 138, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-019-09366-w>.

governmental networks' (TGNs) constitute instruments for states to expand their power and consist of state-legitimized domestic officials who achieve common outcomes through frequent interaction rather than formal negotiation.¹⁹ 'Transnational advocacy networks' (TANs)²⁰ are more similar to social movements than partnerships, are value-driven, consist of purposive actors who advocate for issues especially related to inequality of opportunity and form a linkage between NGOs and governments to lobby them to address certain issues (however, they are "not well integrated into policy making and operate more like 'outsider groups'").²¹

By distinguishing TPPPs from other concepts of innovative and transnational governance, the CGIAR (formerly the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research), founded in 1971,²² and the World Commission on Dams (WCD), which was initiated in 1997 by the World Bank,²³ can be considered as the first TPPPs. The CGIAR was the first informal network consisting of international organizations, private foundations, and bilateral donor agencies. The mission of their research centers is to promote sustainable agricultural development and to ensure that the research findings translate into global public goods.²⁴ Though predominantly public in nature, this network has created a new institutional form for the participation of all sectors.²⁵ The WCD, on the other hand, was much more clearly a "tri-sectoral archetype," (public, private, and civil) and demonstrated for the first time that such global partnerships can overcome deadlock and conflicts. In the 1980s and 1990s when worldwide large dam projects came to a hold and all stakeholders involved experienced tremendous costs, the WCD facilitated a dialog across all sectors and groups with diverging preferences and enabled the formation of an agreement on standards for the construction of large dams.²⁶ This network was dissolved in 2001 due to the accomplishment of the project and since then, TPPPs have

¹⁹ Stone, *Making Global Policy*, 34.

²⁰ Diane Stone, "Global Public Policy, Transnational Policy Communities, and Their Networks," *Policy Studies Journal* 36, no. 1 (February 7, 2008): 31, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2007.00251.x>.

²¹ Stone, *Knowledge Actors and Transnational Governance*, 39.

²² Stone, *Making Global Policy*, 38.

²³ Sanjeev Khagram, "Beyond Temples and Tombs: Towards Effective Governance for Sustainable Development through the World Commission on Dams," in *International Commissions and the Power of Ideas*, ed. Ramesh Thakur, Andrew F. Cooper, and John English (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005), 146.

²⁴ Wolfgang H. Reinicke and Francis Deng, *Critical Choices: The United Nations, Networks, and the Future of Global Governance* (Ottawa, ON: International Development Research Centre, 2000), 48.

²⁵ Jan Martin Witte, Wolfgang H. Reinicke, and Thorsten Benner, "Beyond Multilateralism: Global Public Policy Networks," in *Challenges of Globalization: New Trends in International Politics and Society*, ed. Alfred Pfaller and Marika Lerch, 117, London: Routledge, 2005.

²⁶ Reinicke et al., *Critical Choices*, 37.

become significantly more prominent – both in multilateral governance and in the scholarly literature – with the most noteworthy example being the key player in global public health, The Global Fund established in 2001.²⁷

Agenda 21, which was launched at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, is said²⁸ to be a trigger for the gain in popularity for TPPPs as the preamble emphasizes the need for global partnership for sustainable development.²⁹ They were then increasingly used and promoted by both the Johannesburg Summit in 2002, after which 340 partnerships for sustainable development were registered,³⁰ and the Rio+20 Summit in 2012. This culminated in 2015 with the inclusion of such partnerships as the seventeenth SDG which have now become an essential element in the accomplishment of sustainable development.³¹

In her book *Governance Entrepreneurs*, Liliana B. Andonova argues that TPPPs are often initiated or liaised by international organizations (IOs), which provide an interface between the public and private sector. Moreover, IOs often take the lead in such partnerships, creating transnational coalitions with selected public and private sector partners that have an entrepreneurial spirit. Other actors, such as philanthropists and transnational corporations, are increasingly developing interest in participating in such voluntary governance programs as they can provide political risk management and normative framing in addition to the more obvious benefits such as financial advantages and the opportunity for innovation. IOs have thus taken on the role of entrepreneurs and brought about institutional change.³²

Andonova posits five conditions for the emergence of TPPPs and divides the life cycle of these partnerships into three parts: experimental adoption, broader dissemination, and permanent institutionalization. In her study, she describes that institutional change from conventional multilateral groupings to TPPPs is dynamic and partly endogenous. She shows that such partnerships are born out of institutional failure and evolve gradually and through globalization as experimental initiatives whose successful models are eventually replicated and distributed.

²⁷ Andonova, *Governance Entrepreneurs*, 7.

²⁸ Philipp Pattberg and Oscar Widerberg, “Transnational Multistakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Conditions for Success,” *Ambio* 45 (2016): 43, <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s13280-015-0684-2.pdf>.

²⁹ UN Conference on Environment and Development, *Agenda 21: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992*, Accessed March 6, 2022, p. 3, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>.

³⁰ Pattberg et al., “Transnational Multistakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development,” 42.

³¹ Stibbe et al., *An Introduction to Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships*, 2-3.

³² Andonova, *Governance Entrepreneurs*, 3.

Andonova notes that such an activist role of IOs with respect to the coordination of particularly the private sector is unexpected in international relations literature, as it usually focuses on states as drivers of endogenous change and ascribes only a limited role to IOs.³³ As we will see from the case studies analyzed in this paper, private actors can also take this entrepreneurial initiative, as was the case, for example, with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the creation of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

Another focus in research on TPPPs is the classification of partnerships into different types with different functions. In her book *Making Global Policy*, Diane Stone states the three main types of Transnational Public-Private Partnerships are those that share knowledge, those that provide goods and services, and those that develop regulations or international standards.³⁴ In a study of the effectiveness of TPPPs conducted by Marianne Beisheim, service-providing partnerships scored higher than knowledge partnerships.³⁵

Gavi, the Global Partnership for Education, and the Forest Stewardship Council, which serve as the three case studies in this paper, all belong to different types of partnerships, as can be seen in Figure 1. Gavi is a service-providing partnership, GPE fits the category of a global fund, and the FSC is a standard-setting partnership.

Partnership	Type	SDG
Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance	Goods and Services	Goal 3. Good Health and Well-Being
Global Partnership for Education	Global Fund	Goal 4. Quality Education
Forest Stewardship Council	International Standards	Goal 15. Life on Land

Figure 1. Selection of Case Studies

2.2. A Beacon of Hope for Governance?

The literature review makes evident that in the first decade of the twenty-first century, when TPPPs were recently emerging, scholars were largely confident about the potential and efficacy of TPPPs. In 2007, Jens Martens describes how the general discourse presented TPPPs as irreplaceable for development. Different types of actors, from international institutions,

³³ Andonova, *Governance Entrepreneurs*, 3.

³⁴ Stone, *Making Global Policy*, 36.

³⁵ Marianne Beisheim and Andrea Liese. *Transnational Partnerships – Effectively Providing for Sustainable Development?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 196.

renowned universities, institutes, and well-known foundations to private and civil actors, all seemed to advocate the ability to close gaps in traditional transnational cooperation and support the establishment of partnerships to address global challenges.³⁶ In particular, in a view shared by Schäferhoff et al.,³⁷ Martens highlights the anticipated acceleration of solving global problems, as partnerships would eliminate the need to wait for agreements from governments that emerged in compromise, thus overcoming the institutional deficit in global governance. Furthermore, he describes how partnerships close a participation gap and how the involvement of non-state actors would enable more democratic processes at the transnational level. He also argues that proponents of TPPPs see the financing gap as potentially closed at the global level because both the public and private sectors benefit from partnerships and, therefore, corporations and wealthy private donors provide additional funding for transnational projects.³⁸ As for benefits for the United Nations, he lists resource mobilization, increased support for UN values and activities, more innovation, shared learning, increased trust, and mutual understanding of boundaries and expectations. For the private sector, he mentions new market opportunities, reputation and image enhancement, risk reduction, and better access to development experts and governments.³⁹ Schäferhoff argues that the overlap of interests of public and private actors translates to the formation of TPPPs and that once agreed on a collaboration, no incentive for defection exists, the regulation therefore becoming “self-enforcing.”⁴⁰ He presents three arguments for TPPPs: first, the provision of information (technical, regional, social, and political) that would be lacking without stakeholder involvement; second, greater compliance with standards through a sense of ownership among stakeholders; and third, constructive dialog that produces reasoned consensus rather than negotiated compromise, resulting in more efficient project completions. He points to the WCD as an empirical case for this argument.⁴¹

In sum, authors outline the strengths of TPPPs in contrast to the often stagnant and slow-moving cooperation between states or by international organizations. TPPPs can take on a

³⁶ Jens Martens, “Multistakeholder Partnerships – Future Models of Multilateralism?,” *Dialogue on Globalization*, Occasional Paper no. 29 (2007): 32, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/04244.pdf>.

³⁷ Schäferhoff et al., “Transnational Public-Private Partnerships in International Relations,” 456.

³⁸ Martens, “Multistakeholder Partnerships,” 33.

³⁹ Jane Nelson, *Building Partnerships: Cooperation between the United Nation System and the Private Sector* (New York: United Nations, 2002), 38-40.

⁴⁰ Schäferhoff et al., “Transnational Public-Private Partnerships in International Relations,” 457.

⁴¹ Schäferhoff et al., 458.

complementary role, managing local and global goals by pooling resources.⁴² They circumvent classical problems of collective action, such as issues of governance, participation, or funding gaps, through their network-based structure, self-selection, flexibility/ adaptability, and decentralized character. Through their plurilateral⁴³ nature that encompasses smaller groups of actors, political costs of joining and exiting are lowered, and because TPPPs are often based on the shared norms, they consequently reinforce through the network.⁴⁴

2.3. Sobering Accounts of Transnational Public-Private Partnerships

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the academic literature could draw on early empirical research concerning the effectiveness of TPPPs leading to a more critical approach. TPPPs are for example criticized for their “uneven” problem solving, as problem solving requires the overlapping of interests of the actors in the partnership which is not a given for every challenge existing on a global level. TPPPs are also criticized for preempting more ambitious and more comprehensive goals with smaller goals, in alignment with the (mostly) lobbied interests of the actors. The plurilateral nature can therefore also have a reversal effect and further decelerate multilateral efforts.⁴⁵ A few critics therefore call TPPPs a neoliberal construction that strengthens private interests in global affairs.⁴⁶ Others argue that these partnerships pretend to subscribe to principles under the name of the United Nations without committing to adhere to them.⁴⁷ Developing countries accuse developed countries through the promotion of TPPPs to take away the responsibility for funding from traditional Official Development Assistance (ODA): government assistance overseen by the OECD that promotes the economic development and welfare of developing countries.⁴⁸ The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members, consisting of thirty donor countries committed to an established target by the UN, dedicate a portion of their national income to international aid, thus

⁴² Andonova, *Governance Entrepreneurs*, 10-11.

⁴³ Grouping not consisting of all but rather several actors agreeing to something voluntarily as opposed to a multilateral agreement to which all actors are participants

⁴⁴ Andonova, *Governance Entrepreneurs*, 10-11.

⁴⁵ Andonova, 11-12.

⁴⁶ Faranak Miraftab, “Public-Private Partnerships: The Trojan Horse of Neoliberal Development?,” *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 24, no. 1 (2004): 89-101, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X04267173>.

⁴⁷ Kenny Bruno and Joshua Karliner, *Tangled Up in Blue: Corporate Partnerships at the United Nations* (San Francisco, CA: Transnational Resource & Action Center, 2000), 3, [http://www.corpwatch.org/sites/default/files/Tangled Up In Blue.pdf](http://www.corpwatch.org/sites/default/files/Tangled%20Up%20In%20Blue.pdf).

⁴⁸ Pattberg et al., “Transnational Multistakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development,” 44.

constituting a more reliable and possibly a bigger source of income for developing countries. The reluctance to increasingly receive funding from TPPPs is due to the fact that TPPPs only invest money when it is in the interest of all stakeholders, which is not always the case. Furthermore, they are not an assured source, as they are mostly subject to the whims of the private sector and, unlike the OECD, there is no reporting obligation.

Similarly, Hoxtell criticizes the gaps in the structure of TPPPs, which undermine the guarantee of monitoring and reporting. He further complains that the United Nations forum is not sufficient to develop a basic understanding of these problems and to rebuild the system in a way that makes it more effective.⁴⁹ Due to the voluntary nature of TPPPs, he looks more closely at mechanisms for oversight of partnerships in the United Nations and distinguishes between three different types that he has observed: coalitions designed solely to tap financial contributions from nongovernmental sources; multi-stakeholder global collaborations from different sectors that seek to fill a gap when government or intergovernmental action on a particular global issue have failed; and tri-sectoral partnerships that run a higher risk if they partner with private sector companies or receive donations from individuals or foundations.⁵⁰ These three oversight mechanisms have distinct impacts on partnerships and their mandates.

2.4. Conditions for Effective Partnerships

There are several approaches in the literature on how to evaluate the effectiveness of Transnational Public-Private Partnerships. For example, a 2014 study conducted by Beisheim and Liese analyzed the effectiveness of TPPPs in terms of their output, outcome, and impact.⁵¹ A different study, published in 2016 by Philipp Pattberg and Oscar Widerberg builds on this approach and incorporates findings of other authors as well. This will be the framework used to analyze the effectiveness of TPPPs in this work.

Pattberg and Widerberg note that recent studies have found that TPPPs are not particularly successful. This, they say, makes it all the more necessary to create frameworks to improve the effectiveness of TPPPs as their popularity continues to grow and the UN

⁴⁹ Hoxtell, "Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships and the 2030 Agenda," p. 12-13.

⁵⁰ Hoxtell, p. 7-8.

⁵¹ Beisheim et al., *Transnational Partnerships*, 18.

development agenda continues to prioritize TPPPs.⁵² They set nine conditions for better performance in such partnerships, performance being defined as the problem-solving capacity.

The first two conditions concern actors, namely, leadership and partners of a TPPP. In TPPPs, there can exist power imbalances between members in a partnership in terms of financial, personal, or information resources, which disrupt trust among the partners and hinders collaboration. Here, Pattberg and Widerberg suggest that it is useful to conduct a needs assessment in advance and aim for an optimal mix of partners. It is also imperative to have proper leadership within the TPPP that first drives the formation of a partnership, and then mediates between different opinions and keeps the partnership alive. The importance of leadership is known, but what kind of leadership is beneficial is not.⁵³

Second, they address processes that involve goal setting, funding, process management, and monitoring. Pattberg and Widerberg say that the way in which goals are set can contribute significantly to the success of the partnership. It is crucial that the strategies and objectives are defined jointly and with consensus. Furthermore, a precise formulation of the objectives is conducive, as it provides less room for interpretation and misunderstanding and thus reassures investors. Securing financial flows can potentially become a problem in TPPPs, as they rely on the goodwill of their donors. While it is hard to tell which funding model is best for TPPPs, it seems to be appropriate to limit single-source funding, collect membership dues, and return funds from activities to the organizations. Pattberg and Widerberg also point to the benefits of effective process management and a corporate structure with, for example, full-time employees. It has also been shown that transparent and regular monitoring are conducive or necessary for organizational learning and to legitimize the partnership.⁵⁴

As a third category, they mention contexts that involve metagovernance, problem structure, and sociopolitical contexts. Pattberg and Widerberg describe the fragmentation of global governance evoked by an increase in alternative governance arrangements, which leads to overlap and competition between initiatives and standards. TPPPs as such an alternative governance arrangement thus contribute to fragmentation. Pattberg and Widerberg therefore recommend metagovernance, or a review of established criteria to determine whether TPPPs are

⁵² Pattberg et al., “Transnational Multistakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development,” 42.

⁵³ Pattberg et al., 47.

⁵⁴ Pattberg et al., 47-48.

consistent with international goals, or SDGs. In addition, placing a TPPP in its social and political context is key, as it informs how a successful agreement can be reached. Some researchers also argue that looking at the problem structure first is key, i.e., are stakeholders united in solving the problem or do they have competing interests? Depending on this, a TPPP may not be the appropriate solution to the problem.⁵⁵ An overview of the nine conditions can be found in Figure 2.

Condition for Success	Guiding Questions
<i>Actors</i>	
1. Optimal Partner Mix	Is there a proportionately appropriate combination of the key stakeholders' knowledge, resources, and capabilities? Is attention paid to overcoming power asymmetries present between partners?
2. Effective Leadership	Does the leadership play an active role in advancing the partnership's work and promoting its cause?
<i>Process</i>	
3. Stringent Goal Setting	Are shorter-term, incremental goals set consistently and with thought to their feasibility?
4. Sustained Funding	Is the partnership funded in a way that is sustainable and accountable long-term? Is there a diverse mix of funding sources, with renewable rounds of funding?
5. Professional Process Management	Is the division of labor and organizational structure favorable to accomplishing objectives?
6. Regular Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation	Are there mechanisms in place to ensure transparency, accountability, and the meeting of objectives?
<i>Context</i>	
7. Active Metagovernance	Is there verification that partnership goals align with development goals? Are there coordinating frameworks in place to ensure functional overlaps between organizations and institutions?
8. Favorable Political and Social Context	Does the partnership conduct its work in a global, regional, or national context amenable to its objectives?
9. Fit to Problem-Structure	Are the partnership's objectives feasible? Is the partnership of a size or capacity to be able to achieve the objectives it has outlined?

Figure 2. Pattberg and Widerberg's Nine Conditions for Success⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Pattberg et al., 48-49.

⁵⁶ Pattberg et al., 46-49.

2.5. Key Findings

At the turn of the century, the innovative approach of bringing together state with non-state actors and pooling the stakeholders' resources and expertise to pursue a public purpose seemed to be a promising approach. However, this analysis of the literature shows that as optimistic as researchers were about the potential of TPPPs in the first decade of the century, they were disillusioned after the publication of the first empirical reports, implying that TPPPs were not the perfect solution for gridlock in global governance they had envisioned. TPPPs were then approached more critically, highlighting the fact that they interfered with the accomplishment of multilateral agreements and benefited interests of the private sector.

Consequently, researchers and stakeholders have created guides and frameworks for the optimal application of TPPPs to analyze and optimize performance. In the analysis section of this paper, I will employ one such framework to assess the extent to which SDG actors deal with the sobering analysis of their inherent structure.

3. Research Blueprint

In order to identify whether TPPPs and other multi-stakeholder models live up to their promise in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, this paper will utilize a mixed-methods approach involving primary research obtained through expert interviews and secondary research for my case study analyses. The underlying assumption is that given that transnational partnerships are tools to tackle complex governance problems and that they serve a valuable public purpose, the overall success of a TPPP is important for the contribution to the SDGs.

The methodology of this study relies on a qualitative approach, as there are currently no databases that provide a comprehensive account of TPPPs and their effectiveness. Although public-private partnership databases have been created over the years to accompany the increase of the volume of research, databases like “The Partnership Platform” of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)⁵⁷ remain incomplete and inadequate to present an overview of the impact of TPPPs in relation to SDGs. They list which Sustainable Development Goal(s) the partnerships contribute toward; however, progress reports are rarely uploaded. Even the two indicators of the seventeenth SDG, which are supposed to track progress in contributing to the goal through transnational partnerships, are insufficient to assess whether TPPPs and other partnership models achieve tangible results.

The advantage of this research project is that it addresses both the success of TPPPs and their contribution to the SDGs, which have been previously studied separately. By synthesizing these two elements, this thesis aspires to fill an existing gap in research. Using a Small-N research design allows me to test the hypothesis using two partnerships with similar characteristics and one partnership type entity that deviates from the public-private model. A statistical analysis of the TPPP landscape would have been challenging due to data limitations.

In an effort to demonstrate tangible results, I decided to focus on TPPPs in developed countries as they take the lead in implementation.⁵⁸

First, I will analyze Gavi, which provides goods and services; then, GPE, which is a global fund; and finally, the FSC, which develops international standards. In addition to the seventeenth SDG, each case partnership contributes primarily to the accomplishment of a

⁵⁷ “The Partnership Platform,” UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, accessed March 2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships>.

⁵⁸ UN General Assembly, Resolution 71/313, Work of the Statistical Commission Pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/71/313. July 6, 2017, p. 16, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/313>.

different SDG in alignment with their mission. Gavi contributes to the third Goal, GPE to the fourth Goal, and the FSC to the fifteenth Goal. Because all three partnerships contribute directly or indirectly to multiple SDGs, I have limited my analysis to the primary Goals that are most closely related to each partnership's mission.

To analyze whether TPPPs and other multi-stakeholder models are successful, I will use the conditions compiled by Pattberg and Widerberg and mentioned in the second chapter, applying them to the three case studies. Within the scope of this research project, the conditions for success serve as the independent variable of this study, while the dependent variable is how much the transnational partnership contributes to the respective SDG, translating directly to the achievement of Goal 17. Effectiveness is thus operationalized in terms of progress towards the conditions of success.

The advantage of observing large-scale and established partnerships is that it is easier to obtain the information needed to evaluate the conditions of success. For smaller partnerships that do not have to justify themselves to large donors, relevant documents often remain rather inaccessible to the public. Given that data for transnational partnerships is very sparse, I have therefore chosen to analyze three large ones, though further scholarship will be needed to evaluate whether the hypothesis would face different results from smaller-scale, lesser-known partnerships.

The data will be collected thorough the analysis of existing documents and results reports and using virtual video interviews with individuals affiliated with the organizations.

I spoke with nine persons via Zoom and Microsoft Teams with a rate of three per partnership. All interviewees were asked the exact same set of questions, with the aim of facilitating strong comparison between TPPPs.⁵⁹ Eight interviewees wished to remain anonymous and will be referred to as 'Respondent' plus a random color. The attribution can be found in Appendix A. I asked open-ended and flexible questions, in the spirit of testing my hypothesis that transnational partnerships serve as an indispensable tool in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Some questions are related to the nine conditions and some of the questions to the general success metrics on different levels within the partnership, such as the executive level or the donor level. A full list of the questions posed to interviewees can be found in Appendix B.

⁵⁹ Transcriptions of the interviews have been lodged with Professor Diane Stone and are not included in this dissertation.

Regarding the document analysis, secondary academic literature was paired with primary sources such as public-access documents from both the UN and the case partnerships, as well as with research within scholarly journals, media reports, NGO documents, and government sources.

4. Analysis of Partnership Case Studies

Over the past few decades, thousands of partnerships have emerged to address a wide variety of issues. In this chapter, I will analyze three case studies for their respective contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals. Following from chapter two, I have selected three different types of transnational partnerships for my analysis: Gavi, the Global Partnership for Education, and the Forest Stewardship Council.

Each case study is analyzed individually by first looking at key data to demonstrate the characteristics of each partnership. Next, the conditions for success are analyzed through primary and secondary research in terms of whether these partnerships are generally successful examples. Subsequently, the indicators of the SDGs to which each case study directly contributes are looked at, and to observe whether these can be fulfilled by 2030. The concluding discussion sheds light on whether and to what extent TPPPs and other multi-stakeholder partnerships embody appropriate models to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

4.1. *Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance*

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, formerly known as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, is considered an early example of TPPPs. It is a global health partnership with a mission to save lives and promote health through immunization. It was launched in 2000 to seek a solution to market failures that left new effective vaccines unaffordable in low-income countries.⁶⁰ The mission is to reduce by 50% the number of children who have not received a single dose of vaccine by 2030, the so-called zero-dose children.⁶¹ Gavi's core partners are the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and the World Bank. Its impact is well-known, with over 888 million children vaccinated through routine immunization and as a result, more than fifteen million prevented deaths.⁶² Gavi secures funding and coordinates demand for vaccines in the world's poorest countries.⁶³ In addition, as

⁶⁰ "About Our Alliance," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, updated March 16, 2022, <https://www.gavi.org/our-alliance/about>.

⁶¹ Gavi Staff, "The Zero-Dose Child: Explained," VaccinesWork, April 26, 2021, <https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/zero-dose-child-explained>.

⁶² "Facts and Figures," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, updated February 2022, <https://www.gavi.org/programmes-impact/our-impact/facts-and-figures>.

⁶³ "Gavi's Partnership Model," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, updated February 17, 2021, <https://www.gavi.org/our-alliance/operating-model/gavis-partnership-model>.

the world's largest purchaser of vaccines, the Alliance plays an important role in shaping vaccine markets by prioritizing vaccines from manufacturers in developing countries.⁶⁴

4.1.1. *Conditioned for Success?*

Gavi's partners are philanthropic foundations, UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, country governments, pharmaceutical industries, and research and technical institutes.⁶⁵ Gavi is funded by donor governments and the European Commission, foundations, organizations, and corporations.⁶⁶ In addition, Gavi pools knowledge and skills from the vaccine industry and from research institutes. Through this, the Alliance aims to cover an *optimal partner mix*, and important components of collaboration to generate synergies.

The most powerful partners of Gavi, such as the core partners, are highly engaged and drive the partnership's success. Nevertheless, less powerful partners such as CSOs contribute to a crucial part of Gavi's mission by providing a large portion of the immunization services on the ground, as well as by supporting logistics, mobilizing resources, and ensuring transparency and accountability by urging support from donor countries. They have one representative on the Gavi Board, the Alliance's supreme governing body, and participate in Board committees and task teams, giving them a voice in the Alliance's governance.⁶⁷ In comparison, however, the core partners have one seat each and the donor countries have six seats combined, resulting in less powerful partners having less voting weight. A unique tool that Gavi uses is the allocation of a large share of seats to so-called independent individuals who come from different sectors.

The Gavi Board Chair is also an independent individual, the current one being José Manuel Barroso, formerly both the prime minister of Portugal and president of the European Commission. Together with CEO Dr. Seth Berkley, an epidemiologist and founder of the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), the two form the framework for *effective leadership*. Berkley has recently been recognized for his leadership by Fortune magazine as one

⁶⁴ Respondent Blue (Gavi) in discussion with the author, April 2022.

⁶⁵ "About Our Alliance," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

⁶⁶ Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, *Cash Received by Gavi*, December 31, 2021, <https://www.gavi.org/news/document-library/cash-receipts-31-december-2021>.

⁶⁷ "Civil Society Organisations," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, updated January 10, 2022, <https://www.gavi.org/operating-model/gavis-partnership-model/civil-society>.

of the world's fifty greatest leaders for setting up the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) facility in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶⁸

Every five years, the Gavi Board exercises *stringent goal-setting*, through the development and publication of a five-year strategy with specific principles and mission indicators to contribute to Gavi's goal achievement.⁶⁹

Over the past two decades, Gavi has received approximately twenty-one billion dollars in funding from donor governments, the European Commission, foundations, organizations, and corporations.⁷⁰ However, TPPPs are usually funded on a voluntary basis and depend on the goodwill of donors and Gavi is no exception. To ensure *sustained funding* regardless, the Alliance has five distinct funding mechanisms, divided into direct contributions secured by multi-year grant agreements and innovative funding (including the Gavi Matching Fund, the International Finance Facility for Immunization (IFFIm), Pneumococcal AMC, and the loan buydown facility).⁷¹ Hence, Gavi features a diverse and longer-term donor portfolio which makes it a rather sustainable model.

As noted in Pattberg and Widerberg's condition for *professional process management*, Gavi operates with a Board, involving major donors, and is supported by a secretariat. The Board is Gavi's supreme governing body and is composed of twenty-eight members, of which UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have permanent seats. The Board establishes strategies and internal policies for Gavi as needed to manage the partnership.⁷² In addition, there are five standing Board committees and one Advisory committee to which the Board delegates certain activities. These committees are staffed by Board members, alternates, or independent experts.⁷³ The CEO heads the Gavi Secretariat, which has offices in Geneva and Washington, D.C., and is responsible for general day-to-day operations.⁷⁴ Gavi is

⁶⁸ "World's 50 Greatest Leaders: Dr. Seth Berkley," Fortune, accessed April 2022, <https://fortune.com/worlds-greatest-leaders/2021/seth-berkley/>.

⁶⁹ "Gavi's Strategy," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, updated June 9, 2021, <https://www.gavi.org/our-alliance/strategy>.

⁷⁰ "The U.S. Government & Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance," Kaiser Family Foundation, accessed April 2022, <https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/fact-sheet/the-u-s-government-gavi-the-vaccine-alliance/>.

⁷¹ "Overview 2000-2037," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, updated March 22, 2021, <https://www.gavi.org/investing-gavi/funding/overview-2000-2037>.

⁷² "Board Composition," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, updated September 21, 2020, <https://www.gavi.org/governance/gavi-board/composition>.

⁷³ "Board Committees and Advisory Committees," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, updated September 13, 2021, <https://www.gavi.org/our-alliance/governance/gavi-board/committees>.

⁷⁴ World Bank Group, *The World Bank's Partnership with the GAVI Alliance: Main Report and Annexes*, Global Program Review, July 18, 2014, <https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/reports/world-banks-partnership-gavi-alliance>.

registered as a Swiss foundation with the status of an international institution in Switzerland. In the United States, Gavi has the status of a public charity.⁷⁵ In total, Gavi has approximately 600 employees, including those with management experience for key positions. The Alliance's internal organization and management structure generally has a very high degree of institutionalization, which is necessary for a successful partnership model, according to Pattberg and Widerberg.

In terms of *regular monitoring, reporting and evaluation* practices, Gavi has a very transparent system. For example, the partnership provides accountability by disclosing expenses and the impact of financial or in-kind donations. The Annual Contributions and Proceeds to Gavi 2000-2037 and the cash receipts are available on their website.⁷⁶

Pattberg and Widerberg made two recommendations in particular for *active metagovernance*, checking whether the work of the TPPP is consistent with SDGs and other development goals, and cooperating with organizations and institutions from the same field of work in order to avoid functional overlaps. Both recommendations are met by Gavi through its cooperation with UN Agencies. For instance, Gavi operates in accordance with international standards as the Alliance is among the twelve multilateral organizations in the 'Stronger Collaboration, Better Health: Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All' program that in 2019 committed to stronger collaboration for better health in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 3.⁷⁷

Gavi's mission to bring vaccines to communities that would otherwise not be vaccinated makes Gavi highly dependent on a *favorable political and social context*. As Pattberg and Widerberg point out, it makes sense to build on local institutional and governance structures. At Gavi, this is also reflected in the fact that local CSOs are involved in the vaccine delivery process. At the same time, Gavi contributes to capacity building in different countries through their power in shaping vaccine markets. Like Respondent Orange pointed out, Gavi supports the local structures and engages with officials from the government, thus adapting to each country,

⁷⁵ "Governance and Legal Structures," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, updated October 4, 2021, <https://www.gavi.org/our-alliance/governance/legal-structures>.

⁷⁶ "Funding," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, updated September 8, 2021, <https://www.gavi.org/investing-gavi/funding>.

⁷⁷ World Health Organization, *Stronger Collaboration, Better Health: Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All*, September 24, 2019, <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1250381/retrieve>.

as no approach fits every country.⁷⁸ Naturally, global health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic have made for an increasingly favorable political and social context for Gavi.

In terms of *fit to problem-structure*, Pattberg and Widerberg distinguish between benign and malign problems. Apart from its straightforward mission statement, to save lives through vaccination, the issue is a malign problem that has many complexities and challenges to be addressed on a global scale. Gavi is nevertheless very successful in its mission, so it makes a case against this condition's veracity.

4.1.2. *Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals*

Gavi's mission is to advance the dissemination of vaccines for underserved children. In doing so, because of the impact of immunizations, they contribute indirectly or directly to a whole range of SDGs. Most explicitly is the Alliance's contribution to the third SDG, Good Health and Well-Being, for which Gavi is formally recognized as a contributor by the UN DESA.⁷⁹

In an interview, Respondent Blue mentions that key indicators are to reduce child mortality or to achieve universal health coverage and essential healthcare services. There are also other targets within the SDG, such as certain vaccine targets related to malaria or hepatitis that Gavi is working on. Immunization is one of the most important and far-reaching health interventions that people need and thus contributes to the achievement of multiple SDGs.⁸⁰ For Indicator 3.2 to reduce under-five mortality, Gavi has made significant progress through its immunization programs: the under-five mortality rate dropped to fifty-five deaths per 1,000 births in 2019. Figures for 2020/21 have not been published yet because of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸¹

For other indicators such as 3.3, looking at Hepatitis B rates per 100,000 population, Gavi does not have specific figures, however, the Alliance has rolled out a five-in-one vaccine that

⁷⁸ Respondent Orange (Gavi), in discussion with the author, May 2022.

⁷⁹ "Gavi - The Vaccine Alliance," UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, accessed May 2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/gavi-vaccine-alliance>.

⁸⁰ Respondent Blue (Gavi), in discussion with the author, April 2022.

⁸¹ Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, *Annual Progress Report 2020*, November 11, 2021, p. 5, <https://www.gavi.org/news/document-library/gavi-progress-report-2020>.

protects against Hepatitis B, among other diseases. Over the 2016-2020 period, vaccination coverage increased by three percentage points.⁸²

Additionally, immunization enables children's school attendance, therefore contributing to the SDG 4 of quality education, and targets efforts on addressing gender inequalities. Gavi's website lists how immunization contributes to fourteen of the seventeen goals.⁸³

4.2. *The Global Partnership for Education*

The Global Partnership for Education was established in 2002 as the Education for All - Fast Track Initiative (EFA - FTI) to bring donor and developing countries together in order to accelerate progress toward the achievement of the second MDG with the aim of universal primary education.⁸⁴ In the beginning, GPE started out working with seven developing partner countries; today there are more than seventy, making GPE the largest TPPP in the education sector.⁸⁵ GPE's mission is to increase the number of children going to school in developing countries, with a particular focus on education for girls and "those marginalized by poverty, displacement, or disability,"⁸⁶ achieved primarily through the strengthening of education systems.

4.2.1. *Conditioned for Success?*

GPE brings together the resources, skills, and knowledge of four different categories of partners: developing countries, donor countries, multilateral agencies and regional development banks, and nongovernmental organizations, including CSOs, teacher unions, the private sector, and philanthropists.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, with respect to an *optimal partner mix*, it is noticeable that GPE counteracts the potential power imbalance of partners by defining all members as equal

⁸² Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, *Annual Progress Report 2020*, 13.

⁸³ "Sustainable Development Goals," Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, updated February 18, 2020, <https://www.gavi.org/our-alliance/global-health-development/sustainable-development-goals>.

⁸⁴ FTI Secretariat, *Fast Track Initiative: Building a Global Compact for Education*, Education Notes, September 2005, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/10323/388740EdNotes1FastTrack.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Francine Menashy, "Multi-Stakeholder Aid to Education: Power in the Context of Partnership," *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 16, no. 1 (2018): 19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2017.1356702>.

⁸⁶ Alice Albright, "Introducing the New Portal for GPE Country Partners," Global Partnership for Education, January 8, 2021, video, 0:36, <https://youtu.be/ynfBeTMujsc>.

⁸⁷ Global Partnership for Education, *Charter of the Global Partnership for Education*, June 19, 2019, p. 12-13, <https://assets.globalpartnership.org/s3fs-public/document/file/2021-02-GPE-charter.pdf>.

partners in the governance structure.⁸⁸ Twenty constituencies are represented on the Board of Directors, with an equal number of seats for developing and donor countries (six each), and the civil society organizations constituency having as many seats as the multilateral agencies and regional banks constituency (three each). The private sector and private foundations constituency, by comparison, has only two seats.⁸⁹

Effective leadership in GPE is provided by a CEO, who manages day-to-day operations, and a Chair of the Board of Directors. Both positions are generally occupied by high-ranking government officials, including former heads of states from donor and partner countries. Well-known and influential personalities are not only active in leadership positions for the Partnership; GPE ambassador, pop singer, and entrepreneur Rihanna helped secure more than two billion in funding for education.⁹⁰

To formulate a strategy and set specific goals against which GPE can measure its success, a strategic plan is published every five years, the most recent being the “GPE 2025 Strategic Plan 2021-2025” which outlines priority areas, objectives, and a results framework with indicators to measure progress.⁹¹ This type of *stringent goal-setting*, carried out by the Board and thus involving all stakeholder groups, makes the partnership more transparent and accountable, and reassures donor countries.

In terms of *sustained funding*, GPE publishes a detailed financial report once a year that transparently lists the contributions from donors from the previous year. Since 2003, GPE has received several billion dollars from a total of twenty-nine donors, the vast majority of which have been contributed by donor countries.⁹² Other donors include foundations and the European Commission.⁹³ Donors renew pledged contributions every few years; as a result, a new financing

⁸⁸ Francine Menashy, “Multi-Stakeholder Aid to Education: Power in the Context of Partnership,” 19.

⁸⁹ “Board Members,” Global Partnership for Education, accessed April 2022, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/who-we-are/board/board-members>.

⁹⁰ Phineas Rueckert and Katie Dallas, “Global Citizens and Rihanna Just Helped Secure \$2.3B for Education,” *Global Citizen*, February 2, 2018, Advocacy, <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/rihanna-gpe-replenishment-conference-senegal/>.

⁹¹ Global Partnership for Education, *GPE 2025 Strategic Plan*, February 11, 2022, <https://assets.globalpartnership.org/s3fs-public/document/file/2022-02-10-gpe-2025-strategic-plan.pdf>.

⁹² “Financial Reporting,” Global Partnership for Education, accessed May 2022, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/funding/financial-reporting>.

⁹³ Global Partnership for Education, *Cumulative Donor Contributions*, December 2021, <https://assets.globalpartnership.org/s3fs-public/document/file/2021-12-Cumulative-Donor-Contributions.xlsx>.

campaign must be regularly relaunched to fund new strategic plans, which is essential for accountability, as new contributions are in theory contingent on positive results.

GPE has an established governance structure: at the global level, there is a Board of Directors, the supreme governing body, which manages GPE's processes and is responsible for GPE's strategic direction, financial oversight, and continuous improvement. Furthermore, there is a Secretariat, which is responsible for operational and administrative tasks and is headed by a CEO. GPE does not operate directly at the country level. However, there are Local Education Groups (LEGs) led by the partner countries' Ministries of Education, which mirror GPE in their structure, in that they also consist of various stakeholders, and are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Education Sector Plan (ESP).⁹⁴ GPE's high level of institutionalization is conducive to a coherent and *professional process management*,⁹⁵ as demonstrated by the Partnership's full-time staff, concrete division of roles and responsibilities, and tiered forums to coordinate funding and resources.

On its website, GPE states that it adheres to the highest standards of administrative, policy, and funding transparency. For example, the Partnership reports its grant allocations and disbursements to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It also publishes its financial reports and regularly evaluates progress and target compliance, drawing from both internal and external data sources. This *regular monitoring, reporting, and evaluation* supports the organizational learning of GPE. As Respondent Brown points out, through constant evaluations GPE has a learning cycle that is continuously in motion, which facilitates GPE's quick adaptation to different countries' needs or unforeseen circumstances faced by a partner country, such as international conflict or crises.⁹⁶

As opposed to merely demonstrating *active metagovernance* internally, GPE serves as a tool for the active improvement of such governance through its work coordinating different stakeholders within the education sector at the national level. GPE's mandate is unique, as there is no other organization that aligns all key players and thus creates synergies and avoids functional overlaps.⁹⁷ Respondent Yellow refers to this mandate as a convening power, but says

⁹⁴ "Guest Profile: Julia Gillard, Chair, Global Partnership for Education," Alberto Lidji – The Do One Better Podcast – Allvistar Ltd, February 22, 2021, <https://www.lidji.org/julia-gillard>.

⁹⁵ Pattberg et al, "Transnational Multistakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Conditions for Success," 48.

⁹⁶ Respondent Brown (GPE), in discussion with the author, May 2022.

⁹⁷ Respondent Brown (GPE), in discussion with the author, May 2022.

global advocacy could be strengthened if GPE considered scholarly findings and based missions off of them.⁹⁸

As for the condition of *favorable political and social context*, GPE works with more than seventy partner countries, which differ in their sociopolitical contexts. Since GPE only coordinates local existing structures through the formation of LEGs instead of becoming locally active on its own, GPE serves a complementary function.⁹⁹ As Respondent Brown says, with GPE's work, there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and the model always has to be adapted to the partner country, which can lead to delays in implementation and thus to criticism of the Partnership's performance.¹⁰⁰

Lastly, GPE qualifies for "malign" problems with the complexity of the task of providing education to millions of children, especially girls and other marginalized groups. Furthermore, GPE is hardly *fit to problem-structure*, given that it lacks, among other things, the resources and power mechanisms to fully address the issue of education provision within developing countries. Interestingly, Respondent Purple brought this up in the interview and said that the partner countries' ESPs need twenty to thirty years to be formally implemented and that GPE does not have the time and resources to accompany this process. Therefore, the responsibility must lie with other bodies such as governments. GPE seems more in a role to initiate such sector plans than to fully implement them.

4.2.2. *Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals*

First and foremost, the Partnership's mission aligns with the fourth SDG, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."¹⁰¹ The Secretariat's responsibility for ensuring progress on Goal 4 is enshrined in the GPE Charter.¹⁰² Furthermore, the GPE Strategic Plan, which is published every five years, is aligned with the SDGs and directly addresses Goal 4. The GPE Results Framework, which allows the monitoring of progress in alignment with Partnership objectives, bases many of its metrics on SDG indicators, particularly those of Goal 4 (as well as Goal 5, which focuses on gender equality

⁹⁸ Respondent Yellow (GPE), in discussion with the author, May 2022.

⁹⁹ Pattberg et al, "Transnational Multistakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Conditions for Success," 49.

¹⁰⁰ Respondent Brown (GPE), in discussion with the author, May 2022.

¹⁰¹ "Goal 4," Department of Economic and Social Affairs, accessed May 2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>.

¹⁰² Global Partnership for Education, *Charter of the Global Partnership for Education*, 17.

and women's empowerment).¹⁰³ GPE specifically monitors results that have been achieved with its grants and overall progress at the national level.¹⁰⁴ I will draw on the Results Report 2021 to address the indicators that have or have not been achieved for SDG 4 in the first five years of the 2030 Agenda's implementation.

One target of SDG 4 is children's completion of a free and quality education with relevant learning outcomes for all girls and boys.¹⁰⁵ A learning indicator adopted by GPE is SDG indicator 4.1.1, which measures the proportion of children who achieve a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics by the end of different grade levels.¹⁰⁶ The data in the report shows that by the end of primary school 40.3 percent of students have reached the minimum proficiency level in reading, an annual improvement by 2.4 percent between 2015—2020, indicating that it would take at least forty years to reach the target on learning outcomes.¹⁰⁷

A key element in achieving the 2030 Agenda is having trained teachers. GPE is targeting a ratio of fewer than forty students per teacher, a target met by twenty-five percent of partner countries in 2015 and thirty-nine percent of partner countries in 2020.¹⁰⁸ However, it is important to note here that the data is insufficient and potentially misleading, as the 2015 figure is based on data from fifty-five partner countries, while the 2020 figure is compiled from data from as few as forty-one partner countries.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, according to a 2016 UNESCO report, the world needs 69 million more teachers to reach Sustainable Development Goal 4, a number of teachers that is unachievable when considering the 2030 deadline.¹¹⁰

The results report also shows that three out of four children in GPE partner countries at the age of ten cannot read and understand a simple text and are hence affected by learning poverty.¹¹¹

¹⁰³ Global Partnership for Education, *GPE 2025 Strategic Plan*, 28-29.

¹⁰⁴ Respondent Brown, in discussion with the author, May 2022.

¹⁰⁵ UN General Assembly, A/RES/71/313, 8.

¹⁰⁶ Global Partnership for Education, *Results Report 2021*, October 2021, p. 29, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/docs/results-report-2021/en/2021-10-GPE-Results-Report-2021-v2.pdf>.

¹⁰⁷ Global Partnership for Education, *Results Report 2021*, 29-30.

¹⁰⁸ Global Partnership for Education, 56.

¹⁰⁹ Global Partnership for Education, 56.

¹¹⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "The World needs almost 69 million new teachers to reach the 2030 Education goals," *UIS Fact Sheet* 39 (October 2016): 1-16, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246124>.

¹¹¹ Global Partnership for Education, *Results Report 2021*, 34.

4.3. Forest Stewardship Council

The FSC was founded in 1993 as part of the follow-up processes following the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro and is now based in Bonn, Germany.¹¹² With its signature saying ‘Forests For All Forever,’ the FSC is committed to improve and make sustainable forest management through international certifications which are issued by independent certification bodies on behalf of FSC. The Council’s seal on wood or products made from wood is intended to signal to customers that the wood comes from sustainably managed forests, meaning that it was legally harvested and fairly traded. Although the umbrella organization of the FSC is a nonprofit organization based in Oaxaca, Mexico, the subsidiaries of FSC are registered under different business structures in Germany, China, and Malaysia.¹¹³ The Forest Stewardship Council differs in its form from the other two case partnerships in that the public sector is not a direct member of the FSC. It does however have cooperation agreements with governments contributing, amongst others, to the implementation of sustainable forest management policy.¹¹⁴ In this analysis, I will use the term Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (MSI) to refer to the FSC, as it was indicated as the preferred term by all three interview respondents.

4.3.1. Conditioned for Success?

The FSC brings together forest owners, the timber industry, certification bodies, and social, environmental, and conservation groups.¹¹⁵ Its members are divided into three chambers: an economic chamber (which works to ensure that profitability is not achieved at the expense of forest resources, ecosystems, or local communities), an environmental chamber (which works to ensure that timber harvesting preserves forest biodiversity, productivity, and ecological processes), and a social chamber (which helps ensure that local communities receive long-term benefits from forest resources).¹¹⁶ To balance the interests of different stakeholders, and

¹¹² “FSC steht für: Wälder Für Immer Für Alle,” Forest Stewardship Council, accessed April 2022, <https://www.fsc-deutschland.de/de-de/der-fscr>.

¹¹³ Forest Stewardship Council, *Consolidated Financial Statements of Forest Stewardship Council, A.C. and Subsidiaries*, p. 37, July 29, 2021, [https://fsc.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/FSC Annual Financial Statements 2020.pdf](https://fsc.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/FSC%20Annual%20Financial%20Statements%202020.pdf).

¹¹⁴ “FSC Signs Cooperation Agreement with Congolese Government,” Forest Stewardship Council, accessed May 2022, <https://fsc.org/en/newsfeed/fsc-signs-cooperation-agreement-with-congolese-government>.

¹¹⁵ “Forestry Community: A Directory of the Forestry Community in America,” ForestryUSA, accessed April 2022, <https://www.forestryusa.com/forestry-community.html>.

¹¹⁶ “FSC steht für: Wälder Für Immer Für Alle,” Forest Stewardship Council.

countries with differing socioeconomic and political characteristics, each chamber has equal voting rights and is divided into North and South sub-chambers. For a motion to be adopted, it must receive more than two thirds of the votes of all members and more than fifty percent approval per chamber. Therefore, a single chamber cannot pass a proposal without the support of the other chambers, resulting in all proposals being based on negotiation and compromise.¹¹⁷ The three-chamber model in the FSC is intended to counteract power asymmetries and ensure an *optimal partner mix*.¹¹⁸

Effective leadership at the FSC is ensured by a Director General and a Chief Operating Officer. Unlike Gavi or GPE, these positions are not filled by high-ranking government officials, but rather by professionals with work experience in the subject area and with the multi-stakeholder model.

The FSC publishes their strategy every five years as well, the latest being the FSC Global Strategy 2021-2026. This includes three strategies and twelve goals which are measured through twenty-four intended outcomes.¹¹⁹ This leaves little room for interpretation and ensures *stringent goal-setting*, according to which all stakeholders, members and employees contribute.

Considering the condition for *sustained financing*, the financing model of the FSC is very different from that of Gavi or GPE. The Council's revenues consist of annual administrative fees, donations, ASI-generated revenues (Accreditation Services GmbH, a subsidiary of FSC), commercial services, and memberships and fees. This distribution of different sources of income ensures that there are multiple stakeholders that hold the FSC accountable for its use of funds.¹²⁰

The FSC has both an effective and efficient internal organization and *professional process management* with permanent staff and a high degree of institutionalization through local offices in countries around the world.¹²¹

For *regular monitoring, reporting and evaluation*, the FSC publishes the FSC Annual Report, the FSC Monitoring and Evaluation's Public Report, the FSC Annual Financial

¹¹⁷ "FSC Chambers Update," Preferred by Nature, November 5, 2008, <https://preferredbynature.org/newsroom/fsc-chambers-update>.

¹¹⁸ Respondent Red (FSC) in discussion with author, May 2022.

¹¹⁹ Forest Stewardship Council, *Global Strategy 2021-2026: Demonstrating the value and benefit of forest stewardship*, 2020, p. 12, [https://fsc.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/FSC_GLOBAL_STRATEGY_2021-2026_\(English version\)_2_.pdf](https://fsc.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/FSC_GLOBAL_STRATEGY_2021-2026_(English_version)_2_.pdf).

¹²⁰ Forest Stewardship Council, *Consolidated Financial Statements*, 9.

¹²¹ "FSC Representation Around the World," Forest Stewardship Council, accessed April 2022, <https://fsc.org/en/worldwide/locations>.

Statements 2020, and overall commits to transparency. However, the Council has come under scrutiny for transparency issues and conflicts of interest.¹²² Last year, a report made headlines criticizing FSC for giving its seal to a Russian logging firm that had illegally logged more than two million cubic meters of timber, which was used including for children’s furniture sold by IKEA, the world’s largest furniture retailer.¹²³ The FSC delayed an investigation into the matter.¹²⁴ As Respondent Green pointed out, the certification of as many forests as possible is a success measure for the FSC.¹²⁵ This could create false incentives and lead to certifications being carried out at all costs.

On the condition of *active metagovernance*: the FSC is a participant in the UN Global Compact and periodically publishes its Communications on Engagement and has also collaborated with the UN at other levels.¹²⁶ In addition, FSC complies with the Impacts Code of the ISEAL Alliance, a global metagovernance system for social and environmental initiatives.¹²⁷

Through a range of national, regional, sub-regional, and local offices around the world, FSC tailors its services to ensure more *favorable political and social contexts*.

With the conservation of forests, the FSC has set itself a very large and ambitious goal. However, the voluntary nature with which timber traders can, but do not have to, be certified is *not fit to problem-structure*, firstly because some owners with unsustainable practices have no interest in certifications, and secondly because some forest owners cannot afford the certification which they might need to stay competitive, do not have a certification scheme available in the area, or they simply do not wish to participate in a market-based certification scheme.¹²⁸

¹²² Robin Hicks, “Pressure on FSC to Address Transparency and Conflict of Interest Concerns,” *Louisiana Forest Products Development Center*, August 6, 2020, Eco-Business, <http://www.lfpdc.lsu.edu/publications/bits/2020/20200806-Pressure-on-FSC-to-address-transparency-and-conflict-of-interest-concerns.pdf>.

¹²³ Andrew W. Lehren, Dan De Luce, and Anna Schechter, “Ikea Likely to Have Sold Furniture Linked to Illegal Logging in Forests Crucial to Earth’s Climate,” *NBC News*, July 15, 2021, Environment, <https://www.nbcnews.com/science/environment/ikea-likely-sold-furniture-linked-illegal-logging-forests-crucial-earth-n1273745>.

¹²⁴ Robin Hicks, “Pressure on FSC.”

¹²⁵ Respondent Green (FSC), in discussion with author, May 2022.

¹²⁶ “Forest Stewardship Council A.C.,” UN Global Compact, accessed May 2022, <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/participants/42151#cop>.

¹²⁷ “FSC Complies with the ISEAL Alliance’s Impacts Code,” Forest Stewardship Council, August 8, 2014, <https://fsc.org/es/node/26258>.

¹²⁸ “15.2.1 Progress Towards Sustainable Forest Management,” Global SDG Indicator Platform, October 31, 2018, <https://sdg.tracking-progress.org/indicator/15-2-1-progress-towards-sustainable-forest-management/>.

The FSC has committed in its ‘FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship’ to always following national law; however, without a law that should make sustainable management of forests mandatory, and a sovereign power to enforce it, the goals will not be achieved.¹²⁹

4.3.2. *Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals*

In 2014, the FSC called on the UN to adopt some of its own goals and targets in the SDGs.¹³⁰ A marketing toolkit, published by FSC and shared with me by Respondent White, lists the SDGs and how the FSC forest management requirements and FSC features contribute to each goal. Through the FSC’s operations, the practices adopted by FSC-certified forest managers, and the overall impact on forest markets, the FSC claims that it contributes to the achievement of fourteen SDGs and forty targets.¹³¹ Many of these contributions are not necessarily tangible and measurable, such as the FSC’s contribution to SDG 17, specifically target 17.17 (“encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships”),¹³² for which the FSC cites its tri-chamber governance model and diverse membership through the multi-stakeholder approach as its contribution.¹³³

Additionally, through its work with forest preservation the FSC directly contributes to SDG 15, which aims to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”¹³⁴ Respondent White mentioned in the interview that SDG indicator 15.2.1 includes five sub-indicators, one of which is “forest area under an independently verified

¹²⁹ Forest Stewardship Council, *FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship*, July 22, 2015, p. 10, <https://ic.fsc.org/preview.fsc-principles-and-criteria-for-forest-stewardship-fsc-std-01-001-v5-2-en-print-version.a-4843.pdf>.

¹³⁰ Forest Stewardship Council, *FSC Calls For a Forest Goal or Target and Indicator to Be Included in the Sustainable Development Goals*, February 2014, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/getWSDoc.php?id=2940>.

¹³¹ Forest Stewardship Council, *FSC: A Tool to Implement the Sustainable Development Goals*, July 2019, p. 2, [https://fsc.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/FSC_and_SDGs_revised_July_2019_EN_\(1\).pdf](https://fsc.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/FSC_and_SDGs_revised_July_2019_EN_(1).pdf).

¹³² “Sustainable Development Goal 17: Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development,” SDG Tracker, accessed February 2022, <https://sdg-tracker.org/global-partnerships>.

¹³³ “FSC + SDG: A Framework for Global Change,” Forest Stewardship Council, accessed May 2022, <https://marketingtoolkit.fsc.org/campaign/fsc-sdg>.

¹³⁴ UN General Assembly, Resolution 70/1, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, September 25, 2015, p. 24, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>.

forest management certification scheme” and that the FSC certificate serves as a proxy for this sub-indicator.¹³⁵

To date, the FSC has certified 219,689,802 hectares – or roughly five percent of the world’s forestry – as sustainably managed.¹³⁶ That is the FSC’s record over its twenty-eight years of existence. While the specific SDG target of halting deforestation by 2020 has not been met; the less defined target of promoting the implementation of sustainable management has definitely been met by the FSC. Nonetheless, not taking into account forests under different certification schemes, and assuming consistent progress, the FSC would take roughly five additional centuries to fully certify the world’s forestry. Given current deforestation rates worldwide, that is simply insufficient to tackle this issue.

4.4. Discussion

As anticipated, the two Transnational Public Private Partnerships, Gavi and GPE, have similar structures and ways of working. However, they also differ in many respects, which may have an impact on their performance. For example, donors and private individuals are more powerful in Gavi than they are in GPE, where on the Board of Directors CSOs have more seats than the private sector. Both partnerships have well-known political figures at their forefronts, suggesting that influential personalities add value, such as outreach, and thus potentially more funding. This assumption is reinforced by the fact that Rihanna raised money for the partnership as GPE Global Ambassador. The FSC, on the other hand, which is largely financed by certifications and membership fees, has brought in for its leadership someone with professional experience in the field.

All three partnership models divide their strategies into five-year plans with positive and negative implications. It can be beneficial to take stock and adjust strategies after a few months or years, however, it can also lead to the big vision of the Sustainable Development Goals being undermined.

Both GPE and Gavi have high levels of institutionalization, do not maintain country offices in their partner countries, and have similar organizational structures. However, the data

¹³⁵ Respondent White (FSC) in discussion with the author, May 2022.

¹³⁶ UN Global Compact, *Communication on Engagement to the UN Global Compact and its Principles*, November 30, 2020, p. 7, https://ungc-production.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/attachments/cop_2020/490829/original/FSC_UNGC_Communication_on_Engagement_2020_FINAL_01_Dec.pdf.

suggests that Gavi has a more substantial impact on achieving the SDGs than the Global Partnership for Education. This demonstrates a correlation to the condition of fit to problem-structure, which Gavi met but GPE did not. A similar correlation can be found with the Forest Stewardship Council that was found not to be fit to problem-structure and likewise did not demonstrate substantial progress toward achieving the SDGs.

However, although Gavi publishes regular progress reports on its own achievements and measures them against the self-imposed indicators, it is noticeable that Gavi does not publish any specific progress reports on the SDGs. In fact, GPE is the only partnership that directly addresses the SDG targets in its reports. This indicates that, as mentioned in the introduction, there is significant paucity in the evaluation of the efficiency of transnational partnerships.

In general, all three partnerships take on major problem areas. In the case of the Global Partnership for Education in particular, the gap that is being filled by GPE is not entirely clear. As Respondent Orange shares, GPE's focus is on primary and secondary education, making it the only partnership with that focus. However, GPE only provides additional external funding to countries' education systems and will never be able to fill the gap in education funding.¹³⁷ The consciousness-raising that GPE is doing to bring education back to the top of the agenda, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, is important. However, results in terms of consciousness-raising are very difficult to measure. This is different for Gavi and the FSC, as both have goals that are easier to measure. However, whether the FSC partnership model is the most adequate model to address deforestation would have to be analyzed further by comparing the FSC with other national and international certification models – possibly partnerships involving the public sector – and other approaches as well, ones that are less market-driven, benefitting mostly large forest owners that can afford a certification.

Another question this study raises is whether the indicators may be counterproductively incentivizing, as partnerships may be strategizing about how to collect their data which can lead to skewed statistics as was the case with GPE. Another example is the FSC and its certification scandal. When forests are certified to drive up the statistics of certified forest area, it can happen that the accreditation companies are not chosen carefully enough and that the FSC seal gets misused. The damage caused by this, as certified forests owners have more customers, especially large customers, is accordingly very high and contrary to the de facto achievement of the SDGs.

¹³⁷ Respondent Brown (GPE), in discussion with the author, May 2022.

With regard to measuring the effectiveness of the partnerships, it can also be stated that while the conditions of Pattberg and Widerberg bring added value, they do not tell the full story, as made evident by the final condition failing to account for a TPPP's success despite tackling malign issues. Indeed, these are not the only criteria to measure successful contributions. For example, Gavi is the only one of the three partnerships on the UN DESA website to be formally recognized as a contributor to a specific SDG. Formal acknowledgement by UN bodies could serve as an indicator for effectiveness as well.

Looking at the trajectories of the partnerships, Gavi has clearly become a consolidated organization with impressive resources at its disposal, one that delivers considerable results. GPE, while a large global fund, operates on a smaller scale. As mentioned in the analysis, in addition to disbursing funds and coordinating stakeholders, GPE seems to be taking on an initiator role and mostly doing consciousness-raising. Therefore, the work of GPE could in the long run potentially be taken over by other bodies such as governments. FSC is taking a different path and becoming more of a network organization, for example by becoming a member of ISEAL. The differing strategies taken by each of these partnerships therefore demonstrate the nuances intrinsic to attempting to solve global problems.

5. The Baby Steps of Sustainable Development

In 2015, the United Nations implemented its 2030 Agenda, outlining the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals that it sought to reach by the titular year of 2030. Halfway through this timeframe, this research project has sought to evaluate whether transnational partnerships are an effective tool to achieve the SDGs as they have been set out by the UN.

Throughout this research project, I have sought to answer my research question, to what extent these partnerships facilitate the achievement of the SDGs generally, and Goal 17 specifically, and to test the hypothesis that these partnerships create synergies and facilitate progress towards the UN's 2030 Agenda. To do so, I have analyzed three case studies – Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Partnership for Education, and the Forest Stewardship Council. Through expert interviews with staff from all three organizations, as well as compilation of relevant facts and figures surrounding the work the partnerships do, I've illustrated modern examples of how transnational partnerships work to solve complex problems that governments or private firms alone struggle to overcome.

In order to analyze their efficacy, I have formulated a research design based upon a methodology formulated by Philipp Pattberg and Oscar Widerberg in 2016, in which the effectiveness of partnerships is evaluated. I then operationalized their criteria and drew connections between the success of each partnership and their contribution. The data suggests that the conditions can serve as indicators of some degree of success for the partnerships, though of course the picture is more complicated.

Gavi emerges as the biggest success story of the case studies, owing in part to its powerful coalition which brings together resource-rich bodies as diverse as UNICEF, the WHO, the World Bank and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Though this backing has led to Gavi being a notably top-heavy partnership, through past and present initiatives such as COVAX the TPPP has been able to make significant strides towards achievement of the third SDG, and subsequently aiding in progress towards each of the others, though naturally much work remains to be done, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the case of GPE, results have been significantly more underwhelming in terms of the achievement of the fourth SDG, though part of this could be attributed to both sociopolitical considerations surrounding global education, as well as the current spotlight shined upon health in comparison.

As for the FSC, results from both numerical analysis and expert interviews indicated a productive organization making progress towards the achievement of the fifteenth SDG. Nonetheless, contextualizing results overall showcases a need to formulate more public institutional bodies, as the FSC has in its twenty-eight years of existence certified only 5.5 percent of the world's forestry.

Through their individual progress towards the achievement of their respective SDGs, as well as an achievement of the seventeenth SDG by nature of their existence, these partnerships, in tandem with the UN, have had demonstrable positive effects worldwide, and have been useful tools in achieving the SDGs. They have also had positive secondary effects in other sectors, driven – as pointed out by many interviewed experts – by a modern multi-stakeholder model that overcomes the constraints of traditional one-sided institutions, thus making large-scale projects a possibility in the first place.

Some partnerships are more symbolic in their facilitation of the achievement of the SDGs, while others, such as Gavi, are more structurally substantial in their results. Overall, however, this thesis has endeavored to demonstrate the potential assistance transnational partnerships can provide towards accomplishing the greatest issues of our time.

Further scholarship on how these TPPPs can be more effectively modernized and restructured to better handle the intricacies of the global political system is necessary, particularly in regards to less successful examples. In addition, additional research on the role of the public sector in a partnership's success, taking perhaps the FSC as a case study, would be critical, as would further investigation on how to overcome the issue of faulty data. Finally, the integration of insights from relevant donors and NGOs would serve the subject well.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Interviewee	Position	Affiliation	Date of Interview
Respondent Blue*	Public Policy Engagement Manager	Gavi	22 April 2022
José Manuel Barroso	Board Chair	Gavi	28 April 2022
Respondent Red*	EU Affairs & Engagement Manager	FSC	3 May 2022
Respondent White*	Strategic Advisor	FSC	3 May 2022
Respondent Green*	Policy Officer	FSC	6 May 2022
Respondent Orange*	Country Programme Manager	Gavi	6 May 2022
Respondent Yellow*	Senior Education Specialist	GPE	9 May 2022
Respondent Purple*	Public Policy Lead	GPE	9 May 2022
Respondent Brown*	Team Lead	GPE	10 May 2022

* This person wants their identity not revealed.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Would you call Gavi/GPE/FSC a ‘transnational public-private partnership’, a multistakeholder initiative or another name?
2. What are the main activities of Gavi/GPE/FSC towards achieving the SDGs?
3. How do you know, or measure, your achievements in contributing to the SDGs? In other words, how does goal-setting work within Gavi/GPE/FSC? Could you walk me through the way in which goals are outlined, and results monitored to evaluate success?
4. What does success look like, both at the executive level of Gavi/GPE/FSC and for the relevant stakeholders?
5. How might this differ from success at the client or community level, in terms of the provision of Gavi/GPE/FSC’s service?
6. What does success (or failure) for Transnational Public-Private Partnerships look like to external evaluators such as think tanks or academia? What kind of criticisms do you face?
7. To what degree, and how, does Gavi/GPE/FSC revise established criteria to ensure consistency with supranational objectives such as the Sustainable Development Goals? How does Gavi/GPE/FSC avoid functional overlaps, that is duplicative work, with other organizations?
8. What specifically does Gavi/GPE/FSC accomplish that in your mind cannot be covered by traditional institutions in the public and private sectors? What void is filled?
9. Is there any other information you think I should consider? Would you happen to have any individual or organization in mind with whom you think I should speak for further information?

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