Purdue University and Catholic Relief Services: A Case Study of University － Non-Governmental Organization Institutional Partnership*

David M. LEEGE** and S. Suzanne NIELSEN***

Abstract: Collaboration between universities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has become more common in international development in recent years. Despite their difference in objectives and structure, both institutions derive benefits from this collaboration, including capacity building, greater access to donor funding and scaled up adoption of technology and innovation in the field. However, most of these relationships are project-based, ad hoc and one-off. As such, they are often subject to frictions common to situations where each institutions' objectives and interests are not fully transparent. Institutional partnership can help to prevent these tensions from occurring or find solutions quickly when tensions arise. Purdue University and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) have collaborated with each other for over ten years. This collaboration, while initially field based, started to achieve more significant and

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lasting results after it was formalized through a commitment by senior leadership in both institutions. This case study documents the evolution of this partnership, from its ad hoc origins in the field to a full institutional commitment, and illustrates the lessons learned along the way.

Keywords: NGO – University Partnerships for Development; NGO – University Operational Research; NGO-University Engagement; Management/Functionality of NGO-University Partnerships for Development; Non-Government Organizations and Development; Universities and Development

Introduction

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are under increasing pressure from donors to professionalize their work, while universities are now expected to increase the relevance of their research to low resource settings in developing countries where international NGOs typically operate (Leege and McMillan, 2016). The partnership between Purdue University[1] and Catholic Relief Services (CRS)[2] is set in the context of growing interest in the benefits of NGO – university collaboration, and the recognition that such collaboration requires more than a project-based, transactional approach, but rather one that is built on a long-term relationship of trust and good communication. (Leege and McMillan, 2016) However, to withstand the test of time and overcome inevitable challenges, the relationship must also demonstrate concrete results that meet the objectives and interests of each institution. These objectives need to be shared transparently by key representatives of each institution early in the partnership and encapsulated in a formal value proposition. The results of

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[1] Purdue University (Purdue) is a large public research university located in West Lafayette, Indiana, and is the main campus of the Purdue system. Purdue University was founded in 1869 as the land grant university for the U.S. state of Indiana.

[2] Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1943 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). CRS global headquarters are in Baltimore, Maryland and it has operations in over 100 countries around the world.

collaboration then need to be measured periodically and reviewed by key stakeholders of each institution to ensure continued success over time.

This case study will examine the four key phases of this partnership, from 1) ad hoc field-based collaboration, to 2) a formalized commitment by senior leadership, 3) a deepening of the institutional partnership and finally, 4) leadership transitions. Each phase will be illustrated with specific examples of collaborations that have served each institution's objectives and interests, some of the key challenges encountered in the process, and how the institutional relationship has helped to overcome those challenges. Finally, the case study will look at future directions as the partnership enters the fourth phase with both personnel and funding transitions anticipated both internally and externally. The case study argues that the second phase of the partnership, which involved a formal commitment of senior leadership in both institutions, was the most impactful of the four toward achieving lasting results.

The methodology used for this case study is qualitative, based on the review of key documents and interviews with 15 key informants from both institutions and a focus group discussion with two key implementers at each institution.

Literature Review

There is a growing body of literature that documents partnership between universities and NGOs. This includes typologies such as those suggested by Roper (2002, p. 338-345), various benefits, challenges and approaches cited by Olivier, Hunt and Ridde (2016, p. 444-455) and a series of case studies that have been analyzed through the prism of these typologies (Aniekwe, Hayman and Mdee, 2012). A book edited by Butler and McMillan (2015) documents a specific experience of a U.S. university that partnered with a local NGO in Uganda and the resulting challenges they encountered, which led to learning that fostered new approaches to partnership.

Berger (2003) analyzes the identity and mission of "religious NGOs" like CRS as a "unique hybrid of religious beliefs and socio-political activism," that play an increasingly important role in alleviating global poverty through their deep access to local networks of social and religious actors in developing countries. Van Huijstee (2007) defines intersectoral partnerships such as that between CRS and Purdue as "collaborative arrangements in which actors from

two or more spheres of society (state, market and civil society) are involved in a non-hierarchical process, and through which these actors strive for a sustainability goal."

For purposes of this article, it is helpful to review the five types of collaborative research and partnership put forward by Roper (2002). These include the **expert consultant** and **expert trainer** models in which the university researcher plays a capacity strengthening role to reinforce NGO staff performance and improve program impact. A more collaborative approach is the **joint-learning** model which relies on developing shared objectives and a stronger sense of partnership. This could entail a joint proposal for donor funding, for example. Finally, the **best practice** and **theory development** models go beyond simply collaborating on a particular project to developing a more generalizable evidence base that can influence the wider community, either best practices used by NGOs or theory building that is more directly useful to the academic world. While the benefits of these latter two approaches may not accrue equally to both parties, they are still significant in that they both require a partnership to achieve them, and they have the potential to influence a much wider community beyond each institution or the project on which they collaborate.

In the case of CRS and Purdue, as we will see in the case study, the relationship does not always neatly fit into these five categories, but it has clearly shown a progression from instrumental capacity building to fill gaps in the field, to joint learning and development of an evidence base that can be of benefit to other practitioner and academic stakeholders.

Challenges and potential obstacles to successful partnership are more the focus of Olivier, Hunt and Ridde (2016) These include: asymmetrical power relations, divergence in goals and approaches and lack of recognition of partners' contributions. Van Huijstee (2007) mentions four risks for intersectoral partnering: blurring of tasks and responsibilities, legitimacy loss, cultural differences and insecurity of partnership outcomes.

Strategies proposed by Olivier, Hunt and Ridde (2016) to overcome these challenges include: improving communication among partners, promoting transparency in decision-making, promoting mutual respect and reciprocity within partnerships, and developing trust. Factors for successful intersectoral partnering promoted by Van Huijstee (2007: 75-89) include a clear scoping of the topic for partnership, choice of the right goals and right partners, a respectful, open way of working, and trust.

Again, the case study below will demonstrate how CRS and Purdue developed their institutional partnership in ways that enhanced communication, promoted transparency in decision-making and developed trust and mutual respect, set clear goals and metrics to measure success, learning from each other and finding ways to complement each other's respective strengths and gaps.

Case Study: Four Phases of Collaboration

Ad Hoc/Opportunistic Collaboration (2007 − 2012)

CRS and Purdue began to collaborate in a very organic fashion at the field level. Initial contact happened in Afghanistan in 2007 when Purdue was starting up a new program and CRS assisted Purdue to set up office space. This initial contact illustrates one of the key advantages that NGOs offer to universities – **local presence and local knowledge**, which is especially important in a start-up situation. Purdue began to implement a capacity building program at Herat University, and CRS was one of its sub-contractors. CRS eventually hired students from Herat University (trained by Purdue) as interns to conduct an impact assessment for a kitchen garden project. Again, this illustrates another important complementarity – the ability for NGOs to provide **opportunities for university-trained students to practice their skills in the field**. The NGO benefits from the investment in capacity building, while the students gain valuable experience for their professional career or to fulfill an academic requirement.

In 2008, another chance connection was made by Purdue's Director of International Programs in Agriculture (IPIA) through a local partner, INERA,[3] with several CRS staff in Burkina Faso. Out of this contact came CRS involvement in the Purdue Improved Crop Storage (PICS) project with demonstrations of PICS bags in 150 villages. The PICS collaboration would later expand to a total of 13 countries over a 9-year period. CRS was implementing a food security program in Burkina Faso, and the PICS technology was a good fit for the program's objectives. This illustrates another important potential benefit of NGO – university collaboration –

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[3] *Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles.*

scaling up the use of innovation in the field. Universities have a clear advantage over NGOs in developing innovations, but they need field partners to test and scale-up the use of new technologies. Ultimately, the collaboration was not cost-free since Purdue needed to cover the cost of the CRS field technicians carrying out the village demonstrations. However, this investment would allow Purdue to scale up use of the technology, helping to meet its donor's expectations. Success in Burkina Faso led to replication of the PICS collaboration in Niger and Burundi, largely through the influence of the CRS senior technical advisor for agriculture.

Both the Afghanistan and PICS collaborations, while ad hoc and opportunistic, allowed the partners to get to know each other and learn how to work together in ways that would allow both partners to achieve their objectives. Little institutional commitment was required for these collaborations to move forward – they were more **transactional** in nature, developed at the field level (bottom-up), based on **individual relationships** that developed somewhat by chance, and relatively isolated in their impact, at least initially.

Early Institutional Partnership (2013-2014)

In 2012, CRS hired a new President and CEO who came out of academia, having served as a dean at the University of Notre Dame, and prior to that as a faculty member and administrator at Purdue. As part of her mandate at CRS, she led the development of a new strategic plan which put greater emphasis on expanding cross sector engagement, including university and private sector collaboration, as well as higher standards for monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning, including rigorous research.

The new CRS strategic plan included the creation of a position of director of university engagement and research. The director's mandate was to develop institutional partnerships at several priority universities to expand on the type of ad hoc initiatives described above which were starting to show promise, but needed a more strategic focus to succeed. Purdue was designated by the CRS CEO as one of four priority partner universities, and both institutions set about organizing a high level gathering at Purdue to get acquainted in October 2013.

At Purdue, the executive vice president for research and partnerships mobilized an inter-disciplinary group of faculty from the College of Agriculture and School of Engineering among others, to meet with the CRS delegation. While sharing details about CRS' agency strategy and areas of interest, CRS' CEO challenged Purdue to come up with a value proposition (see Appendix I), including the benefits that Purdue anticipated from a partnership with CRS, as well as the capacities that Purdue brought to the table of potential interest to CRS. Purdue had just finished developing a strategy for increased globalization of its programs, and was able to draw from this document to develop its value proposition. From the visit, CRS also came away with a list of potential collaborators from across the university, with specific examples of their work overseas and their research interests.

Key Metrics

- Number of project based collaborations developed
- Amount of external funding (non- CRS or Purdue internal funds) secured
- Number of publications (could include internal, web or non-peer reviewed) based on joint collaboration
- Number of presentations based on joint collaboration
- Number of students reached through awareness and other outreach activities

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Shortly after the meeting, Purdue named a veteran faculty member and former department head in Food Science, with USAID project experience, as a faculty fellow to serve as the focal point for collaboration with CRS. Over the course of the next few months, CRS shared its value proposition with Purdue, as well as a more expanded Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which included a list of key characteristics of the partnership, potential opportunities for collaboration, a governance structure for the partnership, and key metrics of success for periodic measurement and review, among other clauses. The MOU did not delve into legally binding issues since both parties preferred to develop these in a separate Master Collaboration Agreement (MCA) once the basic premise of the partnership was clear. A second meeting on campus in February 2014 allowed discussions on the MOU to move forward rapidly under the aegis of the newly formed Purdue – CRS Steering Committee, with representatives from several Colleges and chaired by the executive vice

president.

The MOU was signed in March 2014, and was followed in quick succession by signing of the MCA, covering the legally binding issues around data and intellectual property, copyrights, publications vetting, confidentiality, indemnification, etc. While this MCA would not apply in every circumstance, the expectation was that it would simplify the process of negotiating agreements for specific collaborations as they arose. This is especially important for collaboration around grant proposals which often allow little lead time. Setting the ground rules in advance helps to streamline these processes.

Meanwhile, specific collaboration opportunities emerged quickly. A digital soil mapping project of CRS in Central America collaborated with faculty and post docs in the Department of Agronomy to develop a soil mapping methodology and build the capacity of agricultural extension agents and government officials to use the data and progressively contribute new local knowledge over time. An agricultural economics faculty member and his PhD student helped CRS/Ethiopia design a research protocol and analyze data to determine the effects of small scale irrigation with or without nutritional education on dietary diversity. PICS collaboration continued to expand to new countries under PICS 3 funding from the Gates Foundation, including Tanzania, Malawi and Ethiopia. CRS also began to implement a new USAID funded Farmer to Farmer program[4] for which Purdue started to identify faculty, staff, graduate students, and Indiana extension educators as potential volunteers for overseas assignments. A first joint effort to obtain external funding from USAID for a Feed the Future Innovation Lab was unsuccessful, but allowed both institutions to gain a greater understanding of how to collaborate on proposal development under a tight deadline with budgetary constraints.

This second phase of the partnership was somewhat in contrast to the earlier phase in that it was **led by top leadership** from each institution who had a vision for what could be achieved when both parties aligned their interests and sought to find **complementarity in a formal commitment**

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[4] USAID's Farmer to Farmer program funds volunteer technical assistance from U.S. farmers, universities, agribusinesses, and agricultural extension agents to visit developing countries on short term assignments to build local capacity of farmers and farmer organizations.

that would help to meet each other's respective objectives. While some existing collaboration like PICS continued to move forward more organically based on field level contacts, it now had the official "seal of approval" from leadership, setting the tone that future collaborative endeavors would be seen as beneficial to both partners. "**Tone at the top**" is critical for staff at lower levels of both institutions – untenured faculty, for example, need to know that collaboration with CRS will help them to build their case for tenure. CRS field staff need to know that investing in a university collaboration will be welcomed not only by CRS leadership but also by institutional donors who see the concrete benefits of such collaboration.

Deepening of Institutional Partnership (2015 – 2016)

The two previous phases demonstrated how field based collaboration transitioned toward a more strategic, institutional partnership. The third phase has focused on the further deepening of the partnership, moving beyond the familiar complementarity in agriculture to unexplored new areas such as engineering, disaster response and youth engagement among others.

CRS and Purdue continued to meet twice a year on campus, spring and fall, to review existing collaboration and explore new opportunities. Each visit was largely focused on a particular theme: 1) agriculture initially (Feb 2014), 2) disaster response and student engagement (October 2014), 3) water and sanitation and impact investing (March 2015), 4) nutrition and health systems (November 2015), 5) youth engagement, peacebuilding and livelihoods (March 2016), 6) monitoring and evaluation (November 2016), 7). supply chain management (March 2017) and 8) climate change (October 2017). Each time, faculty working in that particular area would meet with CRS technical experts to share perspectives on key issues, and explore potential areas for collaboration. The range of topics illustrates both the depth and breadth of the relationship, which goes beyond any one College at Purdue to engage a range of inter-disciplinary expertise. An ad hoc relationship between one Purdue professor and a CRS field program would have been unlikely to result in this type of interaction.

The **diversification of thematic areas** allowed a growing number of representatives from each institution to get to know each other and

understand how collaboration might work in practice. A big challenge to getting such collaboration off the ground was often **funding**. CRS relies on competitive grants from institutional donors to cover nearly 75% of its funding. Without a specific grant opportunity in which to embed a collaboration, it can be difficult to get started. CRS is fortunate to have access to some unrestricted private funds which can be used to pilot a new collaboration with an eye toward demonstrating success that could motivate an institutional donor to fund scale-up. However, key to winning competitive grants is the ability to plan ahead and not wait until the last minute when the funding opportunity drops. Thus, making connections between Purdue faculty and CRS staff ahead of time, while it may not immediately lead to concrete collaboration, allows potential collaborators to be ready to move forward quickly when a specific funding opportunity emerges.

Purdue also recognized the importance of **seed grants for research** to position faculty to pursue funding opportunities later to build on internally funded pilot initiatives. Subsequent to USAID's creation in 2014 of the U.S. Global Development Lab, which focuses on the use of science and technology to develop game-changing innovations to eradicate extreme poverty, Purdue's Global Engineering Program created the Innovation for International Development Lab. Each year, the Lab launches a Request for Proposals for faculty to respond to bottleneck challenges in international development through engineering innovations and market driven approaches. CRS was one of the initial partners for the Lab with one grant in 2015 and two in 2016.

A seed grant initially funded from Purdue in 2015 that continued with CRS funding in 2016-17 focused on the development of a supply chain management system for humanitarian response. CRS field staff identified this as a critical gap in the absence of a robust industry standard that could meet the needs for the full supply chain from procurement to warehousing, distribution and reporting. That system is nearing completion after two years of collaborative work between a Purdue industrial engineer and her PhD student with experts from CRS in emergency logistics and supply chain. Next steps will include field testing in an actual emergency response, as well as developing a business model for hosting, operations, help desk and maintenance. The potential for increased efficiency through cost

reduction, timely fraud detection and avoiding stockouts of vital emergency supplies is enormous.

Another Lab grant with CRS, currently underway, involves earthquake simulation testing of three different construction designs on the Purdue shake table to determine the most earthquake resilient housing design for reconstruction in Nepal, following the deadly 2015 earthquake. Considering the frequency of earthquakes and the millions of affected households who have little to no access to improved construction materials, the potential for replication is again considerable. Another new project being considered involves creating energy by the upcycling of plastic packaging from millions of insecticide-treated mosquito bednets that CRS distributes in West Africa, thus eliminating the cost of disposal and the potential environmental hazards from the chemicals used to treat the bednets.

Also, a CRS-identified bottleneck challenge became the subject of senior design projects for engineering students over multiple years. CRS requested Purdue to design a soap dispenser for handwashing stations at schools where soap is often not available due to theft. The prototype, designed by Purdue students and faculty according to user needs and built with locally available materials, is currently being tested in the field in Ethiopia.

A key characteristic of this phase was the **growing complexity of the relationships between stakeholders** at each institution. These relationships go well beyond the institutional focal points to project managers in the field and a wide range of faculty, staff and students at Purdue. The importance of **strong knowledge management systems** grows at this stage of the partnership to ensure that all of the benefits of collaboration are being systematically documented since not all communication will flow through the institutional focal points. While both CRS and Purdue are large complex institutions requiring decentralized approaches to decision-making and communication, there is a risk of failure when key institutional stakeholders are not involved in negotiation of key details in specific collaborations. One collaboration, for example, came to an end after the Purdue faculty member left for another institution, leaving behind his postdocs, and the cost of collaborating with two different institutions began to outweigh the benefits of the collaboration for CRS.

Other collaborations continued to flourish, however. This was particularly the case with CRS' USAID funded Farmer to Farmer program in East Africa where over 20 Purdue faculty, staff, graduate students, and Indiana agricultural extension agents served as volunteers for specific assignments ranging from the development of a short course in horticulture delivered at several universities in East Africa to soy milk processing for nutrition and income in Tanzania. One volunteer went on to do a practicum project on processing of indigenous leafy vegetables for CRS as part of her Master's in Public Health program.

PICS continued to expand into new countries particularly Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo, benefiting from the field presence of CRS in remote locations that might otherwise be off the circuit for normal distribution channels. The intervention in Sierra Leone, in particular, at the height of the Ebola epidemic in 2015, helped to avert a major food security crisis through better storage mechanisms that reduced food losses. This also opened up new markets for PICS, and the potential for new production facilities to serve newly created demand.

Purdue also participated in several CRS convened conferences during this period, helping CRS to build its thought leadership and influence in this area. Purdue President Mitch Daniels was a keynote speaker at the 2015 Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) conference in Chicago. Other faculty members spoke at that conference as well as at the 2016 conference in Kenya and the 2017 conference in India. Purdue faculty also spoke at the CRS Integrated Nutrition Conference in Kenya in 2016. The Ethiopia dietary diversity research was featured in poster presentations at a Global Food Security conference at Cornell University in 2015 and a Global Health Innovations Conference at Yale in 2016. Attempts to publish the outputs from this collaboration were less successful since the top peer reviewed journals did not find it rigorous enough in its design. This highlights an important challenge to such collaboration − **field work by nature is imperfect**, and as such requires some improvisation in methods, which does not always meet the rigorous standards of scholarship. Nevertheless, this **flexibility in methods** is essential for it to be of use to practitioners in the local context where they work.

Leadership and Funding Transitions (2017 - Present)

In any institution's life, transition is inevitable. 2017 brought the arrival of a new CEO at CRS, as well as a new administration in Washington with a different approach to foreign aid. It is still too early to draw any conclusions about these changes in leadership and transitions in funding that may occur. However, Purdue moved quickly to organize a campus wide public event between its President and the new CRS CEO, illustrating the importance both institutions attached to the partnership. In the preparation for this event, eight CRS staff visited campus to guest lecture in 17 different classes and speak to 11 student clubs, reaching over 1,000 students and 80 faculty and staff members.

It is worthwhile noting the value of an institutional partnership in circumstances like these. Without an institutional partnership, commitment may be more fleeting if collaboration is solely dependent on a few relationships of people who may come and go with time. Furthermore, the fact that CRS and Purdue have developed a **complex web of relationships at multiple levels of each institution** means that the institution does not depend on one relationship at the top for collaboration to continue. This does not minimize the importance of "tone at the top" but rather places it in the perspective of a much deeper relationship that goes beyond one individual.

Beyond leadership and relationships, what opportunities exist to continue to make it worthwhile for each institution to collaborate? Both institutions have expressed interest in the reduction of post-harvest losses and food processing, both of which are key to increasing the food security, nutrition and income of smallholder farmers. Several recent funding opportunities allowed CRS and Purdue to explore how to scale up food processing incubation centers, a concept developed by Purdue through its Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Processing, in East and West Africa. The Fall 2017 partnership meetings explored climate change and resilience as an important area for collaboration in light of policy changes of the new U.S. administration. Finally, data management and aggregation, drawing on Purdue's expertise in industrial engineering and data platforms, is an area of great interest for CRS as it seeks to improve its monitoring and evaluation systems to allow for greater capacity to paint a global picture,

beyond specific projects, of CRS' impact. This could also serve as a robust evidence base to demonstrate the return on investment of scarce taxpayer dollars at a time of increasing questions about the value of foreign aid.

Perspectives of Key Stakeholders

To gather feedback from faculty and staff from both institutions who have participated in one or more collaborative activities, the authors conducted interviews of 15 key informants, as well as moderated a focus group discussion with two key implementers. These interviews and focus group discussion represent the perspective of ten individuals at Purdue and seven at CRS. The participants were chosen based on their knowledge and experience with the partnership. They represent the varying perspectives of faculty, staff and administration at Purdue, as well as both field and headquarter staff and executives at CRS. Men (9) and women (8) are almost equally represented. Key informants were each asked the questions below:

1. How do (have) you collaborate(d)/interact(ed) with Purdue?
2. What benefits do you perceive from this collaboration (tangible and intangible)?
3. How has the collaboration helped you personally meet your goals as well as your institution's goals?
4. What challenges have you encountered in the collaboration?
5. Has the institutional partnership been helpful or not in resolving those challenges? Why or why not?
6. What direction do you see this collaboration moving in the future?
7. What steps could Purdue and CRS take to further solidify the institutional partnership?
8. What potential challenges do you foresee in the future and how might the partnership help to resolve those?

The focus group discussion participants responded to the following questions:

1. What are the benefits of collaboration?

2. What are the challenges to collaboration?
3. Has the institutional partnership been helpful in amplifying the benefits and overcoming the challenges?
4. What direction do you think future collaboration should take?
5. What future challenges do you anticipate and how might the partnership resolve these?
6. Any other relevant comments not associated with the questions asked.

Below is a summary of responses from each institution according to the key questions as well as some comparison of similarities and differences in the responses. Findings from the key informants and focus groups were combined under each institution. Patterns that arose in the findings are compared and contrasted in the discussion section below each topic.

Table 1.
Benefits of Partnership

Purdue	CRS
• Purdue faculty and staff increasingly see CRS as a go-to, reliable partner. The partnership leverages the strengths of, and complementary expertise within, both organizations. • CRS helps get Purdue faculty and their research into the field. This creates opportunities for student involvement and helps students learn about real issues. • CRS is very knowledgeable about funding opportunities and has helped Purdue access resources. Funding has been obtained that neither organization would have had access to separately, through both joint proposals as well as letters of support. • With on-the-ground operations, CRS has knowledge about the true needs and the status within countries, so Purdue faculty have received input to develop appropriate technologies, then CRS has helped test and scale up the technologies. • CRS has provided linkages to places where Purdue might not otherwise work (i.e., Burundi), and made it possible to try out new ideas without the time consuming legal process of registration. Years before the partnership between Purdue and CRS was formalized, CRS helped make it possible for Purdue to do work on the project it was obligated to in Afghanistan.	• Benefits perceived by CRS staff from the collaboration include improved knowledge about how to implement innovations like PICS on the ground and increased ability to achieve scale. Benefits to Farmer to Farmer include the ability to recruit volunteers and build capacity of farmers to use innovations. • Collaboration with Purdue also helps CRS to answer questions that arise in implementation that we wouldn't have time or capacity to answer ourselves. CRS staff tend to be more focused on meeting project deliverables, so added capacity for research is extremely helpful. In this way, Purdue fills gaps that CRS staff can't do either for lack of skills or time. • CRS staff have also appreciated Purdue faculty's ability to be a thought partner, providing insightful comments, sometimes brutally honest, about their ideas. This was especially helpful in the development of the supply chain management system where the Purdue faculty member and student proposed new ideas to improve business processes and avoid repeating the same limitations of paper-based systems in digital format. • All of this has resulted in greater impact on the ground and stellar field accomplishments that help CRS to meet its objectives of transforming the lives of the poor and vulnerable overseas.

Comment

Both Purdue and CRS stakeholders stress the complementarity of the relationship, with each partner bringing skills, knowledge or local presence that fill gaps or needs of the other institution.

Table 2.
Meeting Goals Through Collaboration

Purdue	CRS
• Even before having the formal partnership, CRS cooperation with Purdue was critical to success of the Purdue project in Afghanistan because of unique situations there. After 10 years of Purdue and CRS working together on various project in many countries, the partnership has helped get Purdue's name out in the developing world, and helped Purdue be more competitive for funding to support faculty research and student training. • The partnership has drawn more faculty into international development work. Especially for engineers at Purdue, CRS has helped identify needs in the field, helping faculty and students innovate to meet those needs. • CRS has opened doors for Purdue to apply their projects/programs in different parts of the world. CRS has opened a new network for Purdue, and connected Purdue to smaller NGOs and small businesses, which has been especially helpful to the PICS project group in meeting its scale up goals. • Visibility of the Purdue-CRS partnership has led other NGOs to contact Purdue about the possibility of partnering with them. Also, the Purdue-CRS partnership has helped Purdue attract some corporate partners, and government agencies have taken notice of the Purdue-CRS partnership. • The concepts of a value proposition for each organization and having joint key metrics have become common approaches for other partnerships entered into by Purdue. • Faculty and staff interviewed feel strongly that the strategic partnership with CRS works well. It helps in seeking major funding and meeting goals of projects. It helps faculty learn about the development world, pushes faculty to think differently, and makes the faculty projects more challenging and interesting in a good way.	• Over time, PICS has become a standard intervention in CRS proposals to donors, one that makes them highly attractive to donors. Purdue's expertise in post-harvest technology has been especially helpful in CRS' food security programs, helping CRS to achieve both impact and scale. Though PICS is a Purdue developed technology, they have demonstrated an honest scientific response that is not driven by one technology per se. • With Farmer to Farmer, Purdue has helped CRS to jumpstart its work in this new area, and develop a database of volunteers, establishing both institutions as credible partners in this USAID funded program. • The supply chain management system will not only help provide CRS with more timely information for better decision-making, but may very well become a common good for the wider humanitarian community, meeting Purdue's Innovation for International Development Lab goal of replication at scale. • Overall, the combination of field impact and intellectual sharing makes this a cherished and treasured partnership for CRS that goes far beyond funding. • The openness and willingness of Purdue faculty, staff and students at all levels to engage is highly appreciated. Collaboration is perceived as genuine, with no hidden agenda.

Comment

The institutional partnership between Purdue and CRS has not only deepened over time, but has led to the development of other partnerships

and widened the circle of collaborators for both institutions. Transparency and collegiality are also highly valued by stakeholders at both institutions.

Table 3.
Challenges and Role of Institutional Partnership to Resolve them

Purdue	CRS
• There has been a learning curve in this partnership between a large, secular, public university and a large faith-based NGO, due to differences in culture, goals/motivation, budgets), and procedural issues (e.g., data use, contracts). • Regarding goals and motivation, Purdue focuses heavily on research and education, with particular attention to Indiana, while CRS focuses on implementation globally. • In the tenure and promotion process, faculty members at Purdue are promoted based on scholarship and excellence in research, teaching, and outreach. Application of innovations and knowledge is nice, but this goes beyond what faculty are expected to do and for what they are rewarded. Convincing some faculty to become involved is difficult, since they may not see opportunities for publications coming from development work. • Regarding budgets, there have been challenges with getting the funding from CRS to match the timeline at Purdue for identifying and funding graduate students. Faculty and staff at Purdue find it very helpful to have a reduced indirect cost rate established early in the partnership. Purdue can still be a high-cost partner, so it makes sense to partner in only certain situations. • Purdue has trouble with the matching requirement of certain grant programs. However, this challenge can sometimes be overcome since CRS has more flexibility with its private funds. • There are other miscellaneous challenges in the partnership. Both Purdue and CRS have vast networks, so sometimes we do not know what others are doing within our own organization that may be relevant to the partnership.	• From CRS' perspective, most challenges have been minor, on the operational level. Purdue and CRS have different perspectives on project management at times, not surprisingly given where each institution sits. • Early in the collaboration prior to the institutional partnership, Purdue was not willing to make a unique commitment to CRS. However, since that time, and as a result of the strong partnership, there have not been turf or intellectual sharing challenges, nor budgetary disputes. • Faculty have commitments and limited ability to take on new collaboration. As such, the ad hoc, opportunistic approach does not work well in the academic context, and the institutional partnership helps to overcome this. Developing relationships early on helps prepare you for the opportunities when they occur, even if that does not happen immediately. • Some challenges have been more internal given the large and decentralized nature of CRS. It is sometimes difficult for CRS country programs to see the collaboration as bigger than themselves (e.g. Pan-African vs. individual countries). • Each collaboration has required building relationships with a new set of actors when it involves a new country program, which can be time-consuming. As a result of the project-level focus, synergies between the two institutions have not yet been realized to the extent that they could be. • Ironically, Purdue sometimes has a more global perspective since its staff and programs are less decentralized than CRS. Global level collaborations at CRS often involve many stakeholders at multiple levels, and achieving internal consensus can be challenging.

- With Purdue faculty having many and varied responsibilities, there is a need to continually follow up with the faculty to make sure obligations are being met.
- When Purdue faculty are brought into a project after it was designed by CRS, there are challenges compared to if faculty had been involved in the design phase.
- The structure of CRS creates some challenges at Purdue in that sometimes the priorities are different between CRS headquarters and country programs; sometimes responses to inquiries are slow coming from the country programs; and it is sometimes challenging for Purdue faculty and staff in moving from the partnership with CRS headquarters to the country programs. Overall, to date, there have been a very limited number of large collaborative projects between Purdue and CRS, which we hope to change as the partnership progresses.
- There is some sense at Purdue that this being an institutional level partnership is the "magic" of why the partnership works well, and is the reason there are limited challenges. The partnership gives high level support for efforts to work together, making people from a wide variety of disciplines more willing to consider working with CRS.
- The strategic partnership leads to a willingness, mandate, and framework for working through challenges that arise. Likewise, the strategic partnership makes it easier to have open and honest communication, which shortens the time needed to match expertise to needs. Having the partnership with CRS headquarters helps build partnerships with country programs.

- Funding is a continual challenge, but because it is a shared reality for both institutions, we speak the same language about this need and can be open with each other about opportunities. However, fundraising is best left in the hands of business development staff, not the subject matter experts implementing the programs.
- There have been some legal challenges in developing agreements for collaboration, but the MOU and MCA have helped to overcome these with standard language and terms.
- Both institutions operate on very different timelines – Purdue according to the academic calendar, and CRS according to specific needs of projects and donor requirements, as well as the agricultural season in various countries.
- CRS' identity as a faith-based agency may bias those unfamiliar with the agency to think that it has a proselytizing mission or is only focused on charity. However, those who become familiar with its programs understand very quickly that it serves all people regardless of creed, and does serious work with transformative development impact.
- Purdue's identity as a landgrant university with a long history of community outreach has some parallels with CRS' guiding principles based on Catholic social teaching that helps to find common ground in terms of shared institutional values.

Comment

Despite the institutional partnership, there are still many challenges to collaboration, stemming in large part from differences in objectives and structure. However, the institutional relationship appears to be a strong asset in overcoming these challenges.

Table 4.
Future Direction of Collaboration

Purdue	CRS
• Faculty and staff at Purdue feel CRS will increasingly be the go-to partner, including jointly pursuing large grant opportunities. • Building and expanding the partnership will require resources/funding to make the collaboration really work. These collaborations on large grants will likely involve partnering with other organizations, to make even larger things happen. • The Purdue-CRS partnership is expected to engage more faculty at Purdue as we dig deeper to see who is doing what that is relevant to the work of CRS. This will increasingly help faculty understand the development world, and will lead to more shared values. • The collaboration will likely expand as we explore public-private partnerships with businesses. • Combining efforts, and using our complementary networks, will allow for a broader reach. The collaboration may even grow to the point of exchanging personnel for short time periods.	• Agriculture has been the mainstay of CRS and Purdue's collaboration. However, engineering is growing in importance and has opened itself more to global development through the Innovation for International Development Lab. • Even in agriculture, there are still many unexplored topics, for example the spread of fall armyworm that is causing significant post-harvest losses, both in Indiana and throughout Africa. • Purdue's food processing incubation centers also offer opportunities to reinforce CRS efforts to link farmers to markets and increase income through processing (e.g. soy milk) and other value addition activities. • Ultimately, collaboration should not only be project based but should be more strategic and programmatic, choosing mutually beneficial thematic areas of focus (e.g. post-harvest). • Student interaction from Purdue with CRS needs to be further expanded. However, students face a tight curriculum with rigorous academic requirements that do not allow much space for outside collaboration. Also, few students are able to meet the foreign language requirements for CRS employment overseas since this is not part of their curriculum. • Purdue and CRS also need to develop a more sustainable business model to manage innovations like the supply chain system. Neither institution is well suited to house and maintain a system of this nature which requires more of a private sector orientation. • CRS field staff could create more opportunities to engage Purdue faculty and students in implementation research on program implementation. CRS projects can always benefit from additional research expertise. • Field level projects can also serve as fertile ground for theses and dissertations if planned well enough in advance and extended over a certain period of time. CRS staff are often more focused on project deliverables than learning per se, so there needs to be a good fit

| | – learning that contributes to greater effectiveness or efficiency in meeting project objectives. |

Comment

Though the institutional partnership is already four years old, staff at both institutions continue to have new ideas on future directions. It is perhaps the very deepening of the relationship that has stimulated the thinking of staff who now better understand how to collaborate and what areas are a good match.

Table 5.
Steps to Solidify Institutional Partnership

Purdue	CRS
• Engaging more faculty at Purdue and helping them learn about challenging areas in development work will strengthen the Purdue-CRS partnership. • It will be critical to continue having regular programmatic meetings to identify opportunities and areas of collaboration. • As we bring together teams to pursue large grant opportunities, we help solidify the partnership if participants address the target problem as one entity/a team, rather than as representatives of two separate organizations. • Combining and taking advantage of our networks can help increase opportunities and solidify the partnership. • We must work out the legal issues that sometime arise at our institutions. • Also, it will be helpful to overcome some of the issues that challenge Purdue faculty in working with CRS headquarters versus program offices. • Finally, when transition is needed in contact persons at each institution, it is critical to find effective replacement contacts.	• From the perspective of CRS stakeholders, it is critical for both institutions to have a champion for the relationship who can make connections with the appropriate persons for specific opportunities. • Both institutions also need to be more opportunistic in a fast-changing environment, and this will require further deepening and broadening of the relationship. Purdue is well known to CRS headquarter staff, but less well in the field except in countries with existing collaboration. • CRS needs to continue to increase the visibility of this partnership at all levels, as well as develop more of a regional focus rather than the current "dyads" related to project implementation. • Connecting business development staff at both institutions and clarifying roles could be very helpful to increase collaboration on joint funding proposals. • CRS and Purdue need to be more agile at developing public-private partnerships and engaging corporate partners in their work. Potential for commercialization of innovation is still in its infancy. There is potential for more, and this is critical to achieving scale.

Comment

Staff at both institutions perceive funding as critical to the future of the partnership, and this will require connecting administrative staff who play a key role in the development of grant proposals and relationships with corporate and foundation donors as well as new funding models. Connecting more CRS field staff to Purdue faculty will also help to facilitate collaboration to seek grant funding.

Table 6.
Future Challenges and Ways to Resolve Them

Purdue	CRS
• Funding will continue to be a challenge as the partnership moves forward, since it is the funding that makes things happen. • Tighter budgets at universities put even more pressure on international programs to be self-funding. There is concern about the donor funding landscape (heavily focused now on public-private partnerships) and about USAID funding (likely more limited, and focused on conflict and post-conflict countries). These concerns point to the need to diversify sources pursued for funding. • Universities are risk-averse, so increasing security concerns will limit some international work for university personnel. We need to continually think of each other as a go-to partner, while being strategic with what we pursue and taking advantage of each other's strengths. • The turnover/transition in leadership and contact persons at each institution will be a continuing challenge that must to be addressed, but is of less concern if the partnership is very strong.	• As staff transition and the first major wave of project collaboration comes to an end, it will be important to build human capital by mentoring and designating key people to enable the next generation to take over. • This case study will serve as an important institutional record of what has been achieved as well as lessons learned, both for internal and external stakeholders. • CRS also needs to think about its management model and how to ensure that it can interact coherently as one institution with major partners like Purdue that operate in a less decentralized manner. • Ideally, these relationships can move from country to country as staff are transferred to new assignments, but this still remains a country-level focus and very much project driven rather than institutional, thematic or programmatic.

Comment

Funding again appears as a paramount challenge, along with overcoming staff transitions and challenges with CRS' decentralized structure and management model.

Conclusion

Much has been learned through ten years of collaboration between CRS and Purdue that will help these organizations sustain their partnership, and that could be instructive to other NGOs and universities considering a partnership. The early interactions between CRS and Purdue that focused on filling gaps in capacity showed the suitability for a longer-term and more formalized partnership. As the institutional partnership was being formalized, the exercise of developing mutually transparent objectives was extremely valuable. These **shared objectives** were one of the key ingredients that advanced the partnership. Two other critical ingredients were **trust and good communication**. The **infrastructure of the partnership**, including the executive sponsors, day-to-day focal points, steering committee, MOU and MCA, and monitoring of key metrics were all designed in such a way to foster these critical ingredients.

Strengthening the partnership between any two large and ever-changing organizations requires continual efforts to become more familiar with each other and how to best work together. Even with clear benefits to both partner organization, inherent challenges can stem from the distinct objectives, missions and structures of each organization. Ultimately, the institutional partnership is what allows the collaboration to move forward smoothly and overcome the inevitable tensions that arise from these differences.

Can two organizations accomplish more in the presence of a formalized institutional partnership? While the answer to that question would be difficult to prove scientifically in the absence of a counterfactual, the key stakeholders in both institutions agree unanimously that **the institutional partnership has helped scale some initial collaborations, inspire new programs that depend on collaboration, and overcome challenges that could otherwise have put an end to the collaboration**. The partnership has also allowed for both **greater inter-disciplinary breadth** to scan new opportunities as well as **greater depth to explore core competencies** (especially in agriculture) at each institution. Ultimately, the institutional partnership helped to secure commitments to **common interest**s, created **institutional focal points** to facilitate the relationship and keep things moving, and ensured **CEO and executive level attention** to the results of the partnership.

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Appendix I

CRS and Purdue Value Propositions

From CRS' perspective, the partnership between CRS and Purdue is expected to create value to achieve the objectives of the agency strategy in the following ways:

- Increases the impact of CRS programs to reach more poor and vulnerable people overseas
- Strengthens technical expertise of CRS signature program areas and core competencies
- Expands access to funding opportunities to help the poor and vulnerable overseas
- Provides opportunities for field testing of innovations and taking proven products to scale
- Creates links to CRS field programs for faculty and students to engage in research and training
- Builds capacity of CRS staff and university faculty and students to collaborate on rigorous research, publish results and present findings at academic and other scientific conferences
- Increases outreach to students to build greater awareness about global poverty and how it can be alleviated
- Promotes CRS' brand as a leader in international relief and development
- Opens new opportunities for both partners to influence policy at all levels through rigorous operations (applied) research

From Purdue's perspective, the partnership is expected to create value in the following ways:

- Providing powerful research, engagement and learning experiences that prepares students, faculty and staff to be the global leaders of tomorrow and strengthen their intercultural competencies
- Expanding access to funding opportunities and network of partners
- Opportunities to develop/apply expertise in multifaceted problems

(technical/logistical/economic/ societal/ training)

- Scholarship, including publications/presentations and course materials
- Promoting Purdue's international brand
- Creating deeper cultural understanding, promoting civil discourse, and breaking down outdated prejudices and stereotypes
- Exposing faculty and students of various disciplines to new problems and new ideas that increase creativity and productivity