



BSR Conference 2009

**Reset Economy. Reset World.**

## Sustainability on a Budget: Sharing Cost (and Risk) through Government Partnerships

Breakout Session Summary

Thursday, October 22, 2009 | 9:45 a.m.-noon

### Speakers

- » **Udeni Anthony**, Project Manager, Dialog Telekom PLC
- » **Shari Berenbach**, President and CEO, Calvert Social Investment Foundation
- » **Renuka Gadde**, Director, Global Health, Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD)
- » **Tracey Noe**, Senior Director, Global Citizenship and Policy, Abbott
- » **Sanjay Raman**, Co-Founder and Vice President, Product Development, Howcast Media
- » **Chad Bolick**, Director, Partnership Development, BSR (moderator)

### Highlights

- » U.S. government partners share resources—financial, technical, and reputational—that can help companies achieve more than they could on their own.
- » Partnerships often evolve out of existing relationships; taking the time to build meaningful connections to new organizations now, can lead to successful collaboration down the road.
- » Outlining the objectives of each partner from the start can help ensure strong partnership formation and can help partners avoid conflict or miscommunication later on.

### Memorable Quotes

*"We needed a cushion at the base of our investment opportunities, and that's where OPIC came in."*—Shari Berenbach, Calvert Social Investment Foundation

*"Once you start working with someone in government, it connects you to a lot more people, and that opens lots of doors."*—Sanjay Raman, Howcast Media

*"[Creating a partnership with the public sector] takes a lot of patience and persistence, but for the right reasons."*—Renuka Gadde, BD

### Overview

Bolick began by introducing the theme of the session: leveraging government assets—financial, technical, and reputational—to form business and development partnerships that deliver social value. Referencing Ambassador Elizabeth Bagley's plenary address on Wednesday, October 20, he said that the U.S. State Department has its door open to partnerships, but he also pointed out that companies still need to know *how to make such partnerships happen*.

Bolick asked the panelists to explain the genesis of their various partnerships. Gadde discussed the value of senior leadership in the creation of BD's partnership with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Motivated by a tour in Africa, BD's senior vice president challenged his team to identify ways the company could address gaps in the health systems in



Africa. Through three subsequent initiatives together, BD helped advance PEPFAR's mission in Africa by providing medical devices and technical expertise.

Noe followed by explaining Abbott's experience partnering with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Kosovo. In response to a worrying trend that one in three babies was being born prematurely in the country, a concerned NGO asked Abbott to donate relevant products. Once involved, Abbott discovered that the problems in Kosovo were larger than Abbott could solve alone. USAID Kosovo was also investing in this issue, and the two, together with NGO partners, found an opportunity to draw on each others' strengths for optimal impact.

Anthony next discussed Dialog Telekom's efforts to address the significant need for technology in rural markets in Sri Lanka, where 96 percent of the population is literate, but internet penetration of rural areas is only 1.5 percent. Their partnership with USAID developed through a relevant competitive tender that the agency put out to develop ICT in the country.

Berenbach then introduced the Calvert Social Investment Foundation, which gathers capital from investors and lends it to needy populations through microfinance programs. Her team wanted to create an internet platform and lending structure which would enable the general public to participate, but they didn't know how to do it. Calvert created an online platform through a partnership with eBay, and the company received the reserve funding and risk coverage it needed to start lending from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. These partnerships enabled the Calvert Foundation to take their project to scale.

Finally, Raman explained Howcast Media's unique partnership with the U.S. Department of State. Together, they created "how-to" videos to support diplomacy and development around the world. Their partnership began through relationship development, which later evolved into a partnership that culminated in a summit of global youth movements on using social media for change.

The group then moved onto a discussion of success factors. Gadde identified three important lessons BD learned from their partnership: First, clearly articulate goals; second, exercise patience—the long time it takes to create partnerships is for the right reasons; and third, measure progress along the way, together. Gadde also spoke about the importance of building trust by separating partnership activities from commercial business interests. Noe from Abbott reiterated the importance of clarifying goals and roles of all of the partners. Frank discussions around the business interest—or the lack thereof—and issues that are off limits for either party, should be discussed early on, she said. Noe also said that, in Abbott's experience, working with local staff of government agencies is almost always faster, more efficient, and more innovative.

Noe and Gadde both commented on the need for local governments to invest in initiatives to provide social services with cash and capacity-building. Noe suggested that public sector partners should also help increase local government commitments.

During the Q&A session, Genevieve Taft from Coca Cola asked about the potential value of institutionalizing the relationship formation process so critical to partnerships. All the panelists agreed that this would be very beneficial.

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