

Make in India: South – south cooperation can make the grade

GOAL 17

Strengthen the means of implementation and re-vitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Post the signing of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is important to focus on Goal 17: Experiences of the Knowledge Partnership Programme show how



South-South learning does offer an opportunity for cross learning and development at relatively low cost thus new and strong partnerships are required to share ideas and work better together.



Knowledge Partnership Programme

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Partnerships for Development

Post the signing of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is important to focus on Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal>). Partnerships were key in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals as well. Unfortunately, most efforts were restricted to technology transfer as a business opportunity alone. (<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm#goal8>)

Partnerships offer opportunities for leapfrogging development and India as a development/learning partner has great potential.

Several policies, programmes and practises from India can be reviewed for adaptation and adoption by other

The **Knowledge Partnership Programme (KPP)** is one such South-South cooperation programme supported by DFID to promote knowledge sharing between India and developing countries, where (a) the environment resonates with India, and (b) there is demand for knowledge uptake and adoption (<http://ipekpp.com/>; [add ppt as well](#)). The overarching goal is towards poverty alleviation.

Several initiatives under KPP address issues which are in sync with the SDGs. Given the challenges and the ambitious SDGs, clearly new thinking and approaches and upscaling knowledge exchange from emerging economies are required.

Making a case

The merit of India as a learning partner is that while the story is still incomplete, impressive progress has been made. The people of India have developed some effective technologies, policies and programmes that could find merit in other developing countries faced with similar challenges. In keeping with the challenges of implementing the 16 ambitious yet non-negotiable sustainable development goals (SDGs), concerted knowledge exchange between countries could mark a refreshing chapter of Make in India.

India makes for a curious partner for knowledge exchange. In terms of deprivation, poverty, anemia in women, under nutrition and lack of sanitation, the country has some of the largest numbers. Yet it houses some of the largest government funded programmes in the world, in sanitation for example. Civil society and research institutions have also successfully addressed several challenges. Women self-help groups are successfully managing small enterprises and villagers are getting into some serious water budgeting, its conservation and judicious use. Three of Stockholm Water Awardees are Indian. It is this diversity and complexity that makes India a good candidate for knowledge exchange.

South-South learning does offer an opportunity for cross learning and development at relatively low cost and so new and strong partnerships are required to share ideas and work better together. Government and non-governmental agencies in India are often approached to share knowledge. Some efforts fail while some succeed. What really makes partnerships work? Is there a formula? Learning from previous experiences of knowledge partnerships helps put together a blueprint for success.

Cooperation formula

The starting point is demand, which is key. The knowledge to be shared should be strictly on a need basis or else it could lead to wasted resources and tarnished reputations.

Establish credibility. Identify key and performing partners on both sides, one the provider and the other who will take and use the knowledge. If the provider is not capable, the effort will result in loss of face and a waste of efforts. Similarly, if the partner who is interested in absorbing the knowledge is not capable of absorbing and using the knowledge, efforts will come to naught.

Establish contact and engage. This is critical. Establish contact with all stakeholders so that the requisite knowledge is accepted, piloted and absorbed into policy and widespread practice. Engaging with the government for programme and policy formulation and say, with the industry that may need to change practices as a result of technology and policy shift, is important. If the change has financial implication, the industry may turn hostile to the technology. Involving them from the beginning is thus important.

Be realistic and practical. Unrealistic time frames and outputs leads to disappointment and knowledge rejection. This damages reputation and the partnership concept.

Be focused but flexible. Whether its exchanges on policies and programmes or in technology transfer, the visualised smooth transfer is often a bumpy ride. Unexpected challenges crop up which will need to be addressed. Changes may have to be incorporated, and time frames changed.

Demonstrate. Exposure visits help in convincing. Bring the stakeholders on an exposure visit and then demonstrate a pilot on their lands, under their conditions and with their people. Peer-to-peer interaction helps. Build capacity and be part of the implementation journey, even for a bit beyond to trouble-shoot if required.

Find a local home. Being pilots, the knowledge exchange effort needs to find an institutional home so that it can be contextualised appropriately and scaled up if required.

Have a sustainability and exit plan. Institutionalising and integrating into policy are some options for ensuring sustainability.

Lastly, the partnership should be based on **principles of equity**. Knowledge exchange should be on basis of mutual learning and undertaken with humility and grace. These are lessons learnt somewhat the hard way but have paved the way for successful programmes.

Contact: Indira Khurana, PhD
Policy Lead – Resource Scarcity, food Security and Climate Change
IPE Global House, B – 84, Defence Colony, 110 024, New Delhi, India, Phone: +91 40755900; Direct: +91 1140755985; E-mail: ikhurana@ipeglobal.com
Website: www.ipekpp.com

