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**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW**

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**A Case Study of Save The Children's**  
**Cross-sector Value Creation**

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## Abstract

The expanding view of how to deal with societal issues have grown more complex than ever before which have forced, what previously was viewed as unlikely collaborators, to innovate what it means to partner in value creation in support of social progress. The private sectors partnerships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have previously largely been limited to philanthropy and simple trade-offs. There are great opportunities and benefits to be reaped when expanding beyond traditional views upon cross-sector partnerships which ultimately is paralleled by an urgency within the rapidly growing magnitude and complexity of societal issues. Co-creating values which holds shared benefits have made these actors realize the opportunities within integrating their operations. Co-creative partnerships are needed to pursue enhanced and greater value creation as well as lasting social impact upon societies' many issues.

This thesis uses a case-study design to investigate the cross-sector partnership strategies used by Save the Children Sweden (SC) and how their work can be understood through identifying their partnerships' collaborative value creation (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; 2012b). Shared value is one of the more widely spread concept of how to approach opportunities within these collaborations (Porter & Kramer 2006; 2011). This is later discussed in relation to SC and how to better operationalize shared understanding of value co-creation in partnering. This includes a process of identifying how partners frames value enabling an increased understanding through a value frame fusion. This is suggested as a powerful conceptual tool to overcome challenges within integrated co-creation (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b).

The gathered data is sourced from five semi-structured interviewees with managers at Save the Children Sweden (SC) who have insight on their business partnership. The interview data shows that SC's business partnerships are broadly divided into either financial or collaborative partnerships. Some of the interviewees show great conceptual knowledge of transcending partnerships strategies referring to theory of shared value creation. In whole the data results indicate that Save the Children Sweden have come far in their development of cross-sector partnerships as they actively have moved beyond philanthropic and transactional partnerships, into partnerships which are based upon integrated value creation. SC are mainly pursuing integrated partnerships through a fairly new program which they call the PLV-program. It aims to develop enhanced integrated partnerships through a shifting mind-set of partnering. The novelty of this pose as the main challenge to SC as they have come far but yet need to coherently formulate what the value proposition of their different partnerships constitutes. The challenges within this tangent this thesis' research questions of *how SC manage their cross-sector collaborations* and *how they specifically manage the value creation*.

In the discussion most emphasize is put upon how to conceptualize SC's partnerships types using the Collaborative Value Creation (CVC) framework of Austin & Seitanidi (2012a), assessing the value types and value sources involved in their partnering. This thesis' analysis concludes that SC would

benefit out of developing an explicit understanding of the constitution and sources of their partnerships' collaborative values. This includes their more advanced partnership types built around shared value logic and how to address strategical CSR. Consequently, their partnerships strategies share the same vulnerability as the theory of Porter & Kramer (2006; 2011), which lacks an addressing of the fundamental building blocks of collaborating in cross-sector collaboration. SC would have much to earn by better grasping how to frame social value and clarify their value proposition through the conceptual knowledge of the CVC framework. A value frame fusion process can function as an addition to SC current approach of a shifting mind-set logic when they are approach shared understanding with partners. This process adds better balance to the fundamental departure of the partners economic respectively social value frame when initiating cross-sector collaborations.

## **Keywords**

Cross-sector Collaboration

Collaborative Value Creation

Shared Value

Value Frame Fusion

Save the Children Sweden

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# 1. Introduction

In 2015 United Nations formulated “*Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals*” which provides unique context to what our collective global societal challenges constitute, thematized into 17 broad categories of development goals. United Nations emphasise within the agenda the importance of using holistic approaches as the nature of these challenges are deeply interlinked and demands a broad set of competences from all corners of society. Hence, utilizing partnerships to resolve these issues are in itself one of the 17 sustainability development goals (SDG), described as a means of implementing a sustainable future (UN General Assembly, 2015):

*“The scale and ambition of the new Agenda requires a revitalized Global Partnership to ensure its implementation... .... bringing together Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and other actors and mobilizing all available resources” (UN General Assembly, 2015:10)*

The SDG 17 hence focus upon how societies can develop enhanced partnerships which involves governments, private sector and civil sector as this will support the other development goals; such as fighting poverty, hunger, good health, quality education and equality, just to mention the first five SDGs of agenda 2030.

Almost two decades ago Austin (2000) predicated that societies would experience an accelerated interdependence as societal issues was assessed to grow in magnitude and complexity, beyond the effective capacities held by individual organisations and sectors. Society’s global issues are hence today increasingly viewed as interlinking phenomena wherein increased economics, environmental and social sustainability awareness demands joint responsibility by all of societies’ actors. This development has subsequently made those who strides towards socially responsible agendas to further explore how to approach new forms of partnerships, in hope to deliver solutions of increased social progress (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Dempsey, et al., 2009; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016).

Sustainability as a concept first came about in the second half of the 1980’s, in the wake of acute awareness of ecological destruction as well as increasing government retreat from providing social services (Dempsey, et al. 2009). Societies’ accelerated interdependency can those be linked to origin of the sustainability movement, which constituted out of growing converged political, economic and social pressures around the world (Austin, 2000). Porter & Kramer (2006) describes that governments, media and activists during the 90’s called out private sector to take more social responsibility in the light of societies failures to deal with environmental and social issues, perceived to be caused by private sector actors. Dempsey, et al. (2009) describes that governments’ during the same period retreated from social functions due to high fiscal pressures and due to incapacity of delivering social progress. The described retreat took two directions, firstly public social services increasingly

became reallocated from central levels down to local levels of government. Secondly, the participation in management of social functions of societies increased amongst actors in the private and non-profit sector, in combination with the public assets being privatized and public agencies downsized (Austin, 2000; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a).

Inter-sector partnerships between corporations has been studied for several decades, looking motives and dynamics of different partners (Austin, 2000). Inter-sector partnerships between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and non-profit organisations (NPOs) have also received attention as a strategy of how to deal with financial stress (Lopéz-Arceiz, et al., 2017). Research focusing upon cross-sector partnerships, such as corporation-NGO partnerships, are described by Austin (2000) as something rare at that time. The phenomena have since been described as thriving and in need of more attention on how to optimize and manage (Lodsgård & Aagaard, 2016; Simpson, et al. 2011). Cross-sector partnerships have come to be a natural part of private sectors *corporate social responsibility* (CSR) strategies in their pursuit of creating value for society. Corporate-NGO partnerships is considered by both sectors as vital in the pursuit of societies' sustainable futures (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a).

Value creation management within NGO-partnerships is far from an alien task to the civil sector actors. Value creation management in the setting of cross-sector partnerships is something entirely different from that of inter-sector collaborations. One of the main challenges comes within building trust and communication, as these reveals the partners' views upon values and supports identifying overlapping strategic interests. Mainly as the cross-sector partnerships often departs with actors having different value mind-sets and different societal roles which will defines their value co-creation (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; 2012b; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Simpson et al., 2011).

With the development described above research on interorganisational partnerships have been forced to move away from discussing *whether* cross-sector collaborations are appropriate in co-creation of social values, since society clearly has moved on without them. Thus, it is argued that research now instead should focus on *how* these cross-sector collaborations should create value and for *whom*. These research aspects of cross-sector collaboration have lacked much needed attention as much previous focus have been set upon if they should occur in the first place.

Austin & Seitanidi (2012a;2012b) have thus developed an extensive framework on Collaborative Value Creation wherein they emphasize that cross-sector partnerships need improved management. They are urging cross-sector partnership managers to look to the fundamentals of how they develop good partner communication and how they model the fundamentals of their collaborations. Porter & Kramer (2006, 2011) as well as Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) secondly emphasize how cross-sector partnerships need to enhance their strategic approach of cross-sector partnerships value creation, viewing CSR as a business opportunity rather than a moral or ethical obligation. Cross-sector partnerships hence need to identify shared value opportunities where both partners agendas intersect. Thirdly, enhancing cross-sector partnerships subsequently demands the need to diffuse the importance of how to bring and evaluate social impact and social progress created through these partnerships (Van Tulder, et al., 2015).



This thesis follows in the tracks of these three emphasizes, more specifically on how NGOs manage and strategize co-creation of value in cross-sector partnerships. This is investigated in the setting of the Save the Children Sweden (SC) with the following research questions:

- *How does Save the Children Sweden manage their cross-sector partnerships with actors of the private sector?*
- *How are Save the Children Sweden managing challenges within value creation within cross-sector partnerships with actors of the private sector?*

## 2. Background

In order to understanding cross-sector partnerships it is necessary to understand the history of how the private sector independently came to develop their practices of social responsibility, which will be elaborated upon in the first sub-section below. The second sub-section subsequently address the perspective of the NGOs and their history of how they come to partnering up with companies.

In the introduction we touched upon how an increased interdependency of society demands collaborative power. There is a need to act upon a collaborative value frame wherein the benefits of both social values and economic values are merged together into creation of shared value for both sectors, this is addressed in sub-section 3. Such a value frame merger is possible to accomplish when actors becomes familiar with the conceptual aspects of what values are and how they are sourced in the setting of a cross-sector collaboration.

In the fourth sub-section, it is addressed that when conceptual knowledge of values is applied in the setting of collaborating it enables partners to realize what type of partnership they have set in motion. This also means that actors can unlock advancement of collaborations and the power of obtaining higher levels of innovation which can lead to transformational forces of upon society.

The last sub-section gives a short summery of the concepts and what to bring with you into the other section of this thesis paper. It also includes a figure which displays the full theoretical context connected to one another.

### 2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

That which is called corporate social responsibility (CSR) are at time also called only social responsibility or corporate responsibility, but most often it is referred to as CSR. This concerns the actors of the private sector and their activities of giving something back to society. CSR as a practice can take many forms which address creating value for society independently as well is together with other organisations. During the last two decades this have come to increasingly included cross-sector partnership strategies with organisations such as NGOs (Lodsgård & Aagaard, 2017; Simpson, et al, 2011).

Porter & Kramer (2006) describes that companies have long been considered to prosper upon the expense of the communities and societies they operate within. This have caused a tension to build up between the two. There has been a long-standing tradition between private sector and society which focuses upon handling this tension rather than viewing their interdependence. This means that practices of corporate social responsibility (CSR) have been developed from this standpoint which originally views businesses and societies as something disintegrated. This have subsequently made the practices of CSR responsive in its nature as its focus is exerted upon dealing with the tension.

Porter & Kramer (2006) explains that CSR is most often enacted upon two elements. The first element is explained as creating positive influence and the second element upon mitigating negative influences. Positive influences are managed through the role of acting as - *a good corporate citizen* -

wherein companies identify and support societies' broad needs. The second element of managing negative influence, involves mitigating effects of business activities that have happened or are suspected to take place in the future. These two rather broad roles are where the private sector falls short, as they fail to *"identify, prioritize and address the social issues that matter most or the ones on which it can make the biggest impact"* (Porter & Kramer, 2006:83). Over time some corporations and companies have come to realize this, but still have a journey ahead. Porter & Kramer (2011:64) have in their publication identified several cases of an inception of an evolved type of CSR.

*"The recognition is there... Yet we still lack an overall framework for guiding these efforts, and most companies remain stuck in a 'social responsibility' mindset in which societal issues are at the periphery, not the core."* (Porter & Kramer, 2011:64)

But the early practices of CSR still leave the corporations' reputation and legitimacy to continuously be questioned by societies as many remain in an outdated value creation management, according to Porter & Kramer (2011).

The private sectors inability of meeting society's needs can be traced back to that of societal transformations over decades. Corporations have lost their societal connection and role in the individual communities as they nowadays often are considered global, even at the inception. It is natural to not feel and lose connection to smaller communities as companies starts to define themselves as global organizations without country or location as an origin. Ultimately, this process has meant losing perspective of how the configuration value chains so that the companies can benefit out of social value creation (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

The inception of CSR in the 80's is argued by Porter & Kramer (2006) as directly caused by governments, activists and media; wherein private sector was pressured into taking more responsibility for the negative influences their operations had created. Companies hastened to respond to this societal pressure which gave rise to the deployment of the initial practices of CSR, which today is deemed outdated by Porter & Kramer (2011). The main reason for their poor development was that they were based upon the primary intent to cool down the public's outrage, as the private sector not yet fully understood how to go about in acting with social responsibility. This is argued as understandable by Porter & Kramer (2006) as the competence of creating social values was not something possessed by the private sector at this period since they lacked experience and insight of how create value which would bring social impact linked with needed societal progress. The result out of these early CSR projects are thus extensively cosmetic as the core objectives resided within managing public relations (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

The CSR reports produced by corporations which describes these early initiatives of CSR consequently left out the procedures of how social change and impact came to be delivered. The reports mostly use anecdotal results which largely infers delivery of societal beneficial change and impact. The

details of these reports instead focused upon how the inputs combined with activities resulted into outputs. That is, how efficiently labour hours and capital was invested in achieving the CSR projects objectives, which never touched upon the effect or impact the project had upon society (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Van Tulder, et al, 2015). These reports quickly became a standard approach of corporations in their attempts to accommodate the pressure from society of corporate social responsibility. Corporations gained credibility through these reports initially, as third party organisation started ranking the output of resource investments annually made into CSR-projects. These ranking systems also neglected the produced social outcome and impact these practices had upon society. The ranking systems legitimized the approach of what Porter & Kramer (2006) call responsive CSR, which made them look like good corporate citizens.

Lodsgård & Aagaard (2017), and Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) are referring to several studies which have evaluated private sector's CSR efforts, looking into the financial and social performance. These studies present both negative and positive correlations between CSR and business performance but overall the discourse show considerable ambiguous results of CSR's ability to produce profits and social impact. Pelozo & Papania (2008) deemed many of these studies as invalid as they treat CSR as a homogeneous concept, wherein fact private sectors approach to CSR holds a great variety of different corporate practices. A more significant remark by Pelozo & Papania (2008) is that many of these studies never addresses the alignment between the CSR programs' objectives and the targeted stakeholders societal progress, merely that occurrence of CSR programs amongst the companies' activities.

Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) and Van Tulder, et al. (2015) argues that even if research rejects CSR as an ungraceful practice, with a doubtful history of alternative motives, this does not mean that private sector's social responsibility can evolve into something fruitful. The increasing trend of companies using CSR as a tool in their management of public relations should instead be viewed as an opportunity and a platform for continuing the development of these into more strategic practices. CSR can bring strategical value to a company when it's approached as something of the corporation's core business (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) still acknowledged that corporations' motives and processes within CSR should be questioned and regularly audited so that doubtful practices can be rooted out. Hence it is important to be able to identify how corporations justify their CSR programs, to understand how many corporations today can leave these practices behind in favour of better opportunities which benefits both society and business.

### 2.1.1 Justifying Responsive CSR

Porter & Kramer (2006) describes that responsive CSR can be justified upon four types of reasoning, which adhere to CSR carried out today as well as historically (Porter & Kramer 2011; Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016) (se figure 1). Below these justifications are further explained and put into historical example of how the chocolate industry was affected by child's rights pressure in their supplier lines during the 90's.

The first justification reasoning can be described as a corporation's good conscious; companies should take social responsibility as it is *morally and ethical* correct do so, it is their obligation as good corporate citizens. The problem with this justification arises at times when corporations find their CSR-activities in competition with their regular business activities. In situations like these CSR becomes economical unjustified as it cannibalizes upon the profits and functions of the core business of the corporation. An example of such CSR-practice is described by Berlan (2016) in the cocoa industry during the 90's when the general public were outraged about child labour at cocoa farms in Africa. The chocolate corporations quickly condemned the cocoa suppliers and enforced a ban on child labour within their supplier lines, which largely

reinstated the market demand of chocolate. Not condemning child labour in supplier lines would be considered immoral and unethical by the public. Banning such practices is economic justifiable as it has effect upon their market demand. The moral and ethical justification ground of taking this responsibility can be viewed as becoming problematic as we look closer into what happened after the child labour ban was enforced. The majority of the chocolate corporations never secured that the children were better off after the child labour ban. The corporations where directly responsible for the children's employment termination and later did not take the responsibility of secure their economic survival. The reason of why the corporation did not do so might be because of ignorance of the situation but it could also be perceived as an economical unjustified action. Their market demand was reinstated and now the corporations where perceived to have taken social responsibility.

Another reasoning of how to economically justify CSR is upon the benefits it brings to the corporate *reputation*, which is one of the more common approaches to social responsibility (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Corporate investment into CSR because of reputation closely links to the ground of being perceived as acting with moral and within ethical behaviour. The reputational function of CSR ensures the consumers of the corporation's good intents as it creates legitimacy in sense of holding a good track record. The main focus is upon the satisfying an external audience. We can again use the example of the cocoa industry in providing a context of reputational justified CSR. Some consumers campaigned for the children to be put into schools which some of the corporations responded to and provided the children with means of getting an elementary education. Berlan (2016) describes that there were several issues with the education supplied to these children, the quality of the teachings was largely inferior and held no significant improvement upon the children's continued life. The most harmful

- Justification grounds of responsive CSR
1. Moral and Ethical right – Being a good corporate citizen, doing the right thing Can be difficult when acting in grey-zones
  2. Reputational – Managing public opinion of the corp. brand which can function as insurance of future incidents
  3. Short-term Sustainability – Profit driven by incorporating generic social value projects which creates saving costs
  4. License to operate – Offering communities something back creates good-will which eases operations but not strategically connected to core operations

Figure 1 - Justification grounds of responsive CSR  
Source: Porter & Kramer, 2006

issues were that corporal punishments the schools used as well as children suffering from serious malnutrition because of lack of food in these schools. The CSR approach of securing the children education can be justified upon moral but maybe more so on the grounds of reputation gained and relationship building with the consumers campaigning for the children's well-being. Again, none of these companies cared to follow up the quality of the education and well-being of the children.

A third justification ground given by Porter & Kramer (2006) of responsive CSR, are the economic benefits of *small-scale sustainability*. This type of CSR justification merge well with the profit frame as small-scale sustainability often means saving on costs which produces immediate financial benefits. An example of this is the fast-food industries interest in reducing the consumers use of plastic straws. The scope of such CSR is hence justified upon its basis of being smart business strategies apart from being viewed as a socially ethical obligation. Fast food restaurants dealing with reducing plastic items is an example of such CSR justification.

The fourth listed justification of responsive CSR described by Porter & Kramer (2006) is based upon *license-to-operate* which relates to the recurring aspect of managing the company's relationships with the communities they operate within. It involves establishing dialogues with communities to offer benefits back as means to gain better and smoother access which offers increased efficiency of operation. These CSR practices are seemingly on the right path but brings two issues according to Porter & Kramer (2006). Firstly, license-to-operate can only be granted by those in power of the community (which thus cannot be granted by children), which means that value creation is centred to community members which already have large influence and likely might through this position not be affected by the companies' negative influences. Berlan (2016) tangents this as she brings attention that companies which are identifying child's rights issue often turn to consult parents on the best interest of their child, often never involving the child itself. Secondly, license-to-operate often means offering the community the resources they want, an interest which might fall outside of the scope of the company's core operations. Porter & Kramer (2006) are thus critical to this justification as when companies tries to conciliate communities it often leads to companies acting outside their core operations. In these situations, the social value created is largely left unappropriated by the companies themselves, as the social value produced does not relate to the company's core operations.

## **2.2 NGO's Social Value Creation**

Porter & Kramer (2006;2011) argue that companies of the private sector and society have been pitted against each other, as a part of an advocacy agenda of different activist organisations who strides for social change and rights. Amongst such activist organisations are NGOs advocating for child's rights as Collins (2014) describes that NGOs carrying for children's wellbeing commonly operates to effect private actors' operations to hold better social standards and take responsibility for their influence on communities.

Both sides have continuously acted independently even though they lacked the resources and capabilities of creating enough social value to impact society. This aspect was addressed almost 20 years ago by Austin (2000) which presented an insightful forecast stating that the social and economic development of our century would be increasingly needed to be more interdependent in its value creation. He concluded that all sectors, including the NGOs in the civil sector, were rapidly faced with new complex challenges as societal issues was identified as alarmingly more demanding than what society had realized before. In the upcoming years this forecast has been considered valid as Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) concluded that societies are going through:

*“... an unprecedented proliferation of ‘accelerated interdependence’... ... across the public, profit and non-profit sectors” (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a:929).*

Austin (2000) consider this development to be a result out of the trend of devolution of functions within public authorities relocated away from the central government to instead reside in outer local level of public sector which has lacked the competence to manage these functions. Furthermore, the same functions have simultaneously also been diffused from public sector into private- and non-profit sector. This thus means that over the last two decades NGOs burden has considerably grown in aspect of their scope of managing societal issues and advocating social responsibility. In addition to these issues, Austin (2000) described that parallel to this development:

*“Traditional funding sources and institutional capacities have not kept pace ...[and] the search for new resources... ... is bringing nonprofits and corporations together” (Austin, 2000:69).*

These issue and conclusion are echoed by a recent quantitative study by López-Arceiz et al. (2017) investigating Spanish NGOs experiencing financial stress. Their study revealed that social organisations, such as NGOs, which experienced financial stress in the period of 2009-2012 held specific characteristics. Two such characteristics were a high dependency of government funding and a lack of access to market funding. They describe that these NGOs foremost interest of the private sector were limited to receiving financial support and resources to sustain their existing independent value creation (López-Arceiz et al., 2017). Besides the issues of accessing funding to run operations during the recession, these

As NGOs are dependent upon financial support their exposure and visibility are crucial. as this enhanced the NGOs mobilization performance of the community in the context of their social cause and its impact (Simpson, et al. 2011).

An additional type of pressure which recently emerged in society is the increasing attention towards evaluation of impact of social programs launched both within CSR context and by the NGOs, looking into how social value is de facto delivered to society (Van Tulder, et al., 2015). This pressure means that NGOs’ social program reports containing outputs similar to the CSR reports is no longer an

acceptable practice of evaluation. More evidence-based impacts are demanded by stakeholders and partners as the competition of funding has grown in the NGO sector. Outputs in this context can be described as the number of children reached and participating in a program which tangents the above critic of CSR program reports of limiting the reports to quantitative evaluation of hours and capital invested in the program. Surprisingly the origin of the pressure is explained by Van Tulder et al. (2015) as something which surfaced from within both sectors as some actors saw that their actions of social responsibility were lacking proven impact which could seriously damage their legitimacy and reputation. What is even more interesting is that Van Tulder, et al. (2015) describes a survey carried out in 2013 which entails that NGOs are less considerate about the vitalness to prove impact of social programs compared to the private sector's social programs. This is interesting as NGOs compared to private actors have a longer experience of running social programs but more importantly, as mentioned before, NGOs are more dependent upon their public relationship to generate acquire capital. This situation reflects the acuteness of NGO's financial situation in connection to evaluation methods as some of these actors seemingly are having trouble realizing the weight of this pressure and how it can affect their reputation in the future which is equalled with their future ability to acquire capital.

The NGO's practical issues associated with the pressure of enhanced evaluation are connected to the research and development of more enhanced methods which looks into the cost and benefit assessments of the programs. In other words, the *efficiency* of their social value creation, which is crucial for the NGO's public image of being responsible and competent in their management of the capital acquired through donations from both the general public, public funding and corporate funding. The additional aspect of evaluation is their success of mitigating the identified social issues of their individual agenda which is connected to the NGO's performance of *effectively* delivering social impact. In other words, how well they interpret the social issues into social missions and their ability to evaluate the outcome and impact of the social programs launched.

Developing enhanced evidence-based evaluation methods which accurately measure social impact is considered too large of a challenge to be carried out independently by NGOs and the non-profit sector (Van Tulder, et al. 2015). Evidently, they need external support to solve these issues as the pressure of evaluation is rapidly growing and can have fatal consequences for the NGOs future. The



foremost challenge in development of these methods is to get access to the resources which can enable the development of them. Which is a troublesome issue as the NGOs access to resources have been scarcer over the last decades. The 21th century has been financially turbulent times for the NGO-sector as the competitiveness for resources has increased with a growing number of organisations within the sector (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; López-Arceiz, et al., 2017).

López-Arceiz et al. (2017) concluded that NGOs which in the same period as of the 2008's recession approached collaboration strategies with other NGOs showed indication of a lower financial stress, that is intra-sector collaborations. They describe that the success of these collaborative strategies was the result out of an access to critical resource and capabilities which supported the NGOs' financial sustainment. In their definition of collaboration, they emphasise the participation and proactive attitude as the key factors of how to manage these collaborative strategies.

Moreover, their results show that NGO's collaborative strategies were the most effective solution to mitigate financial stress. Important to point out is that López-Arceiz et al. (2017:1632) limits their scope of collaboration to encompass "obtaining and sharing funding", thus not interdependent value creation. At the same time there were downside of same-sector collaborations as the NGOs still competed for the same funding outside their collaboration focus which showed negative collaboration enhancement. The foremost negative effect of these collaborations was a loss of visibility for the NGOs individual social agenda as the attention became divided between them in their same-sector collaboration.

These challenges (depicted in figure 2) has as of the last years led to a search of new opportunities and revised business models within the NGO sector as actors have repositioned their value propositions to segment their market focus. In the turbulence of these issues new collaboration strategy has evolved, that of cross-sector collaborations with the private sector which thus would mitigate some of the above downsides. NGOs and companies have thus also looked into co-joint value creation instead of independent value creation. These new cross-sector collaborations departed evolvement came from NGO's previous philanthropic partnerships with private sector, which had to a large extent been

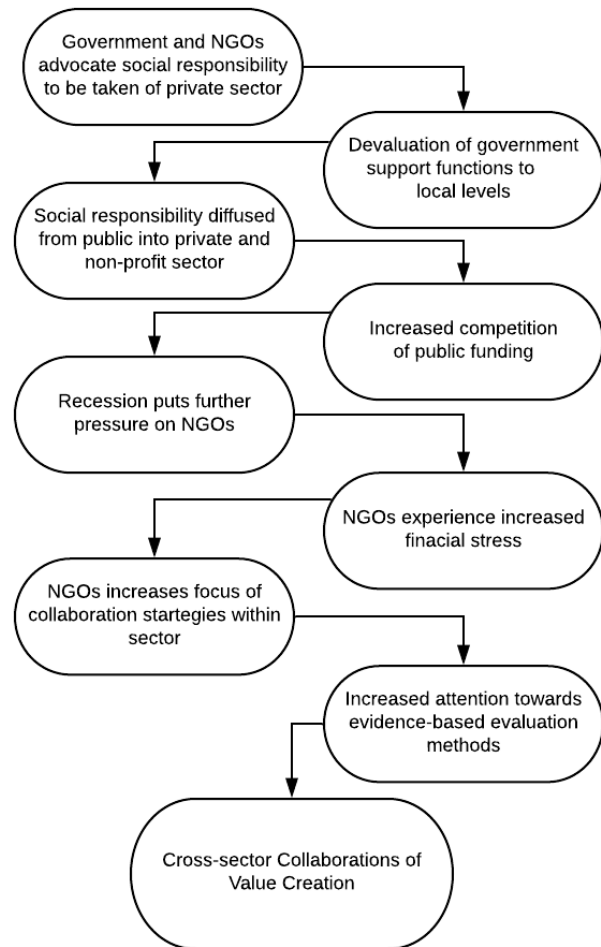


Figure 2 - Illustration of the History of NGOs. Source: Author

unilateral started advancing into more bilateral exchanges. This evolvement was not easily pursued as Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) describes that not all NGOs saw this as a tolerable opportunity as many of them had a history of an anti-corporate identity based on their doubts of their motives. This can arguably be easily understood with reservation of the private sectors historically doubtful practice of CSR described by Porter & Kramer (2006, 2011). Even though some did not like these new collaborations focuses many NGOs' attitude were forced into moderation by the acuteness of their situation. This eventually made many discover previously uncharted linked interest with the private sector wherein these collaborations were built upon. NGOs which ventured further into these strategies have started to identify corporations with specific organisational fit which have been able to offer access to distinct and complementary resources besides their funding something which otherwise would never be possible to access. This process of discovery was primarily enabled by the actors initiating open dialogues and revised biases of one another as the sectors new insight about the potential of shared value creation showed great promise and continuously have increased trust within the between the sectors (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Porter & Kramer, 2011).

### **2.3 The Enablers of Cross-sector Collaboration**

Economic and social value creation have traditionally been processes carried out separately in by businesses and NGOs, respectively. When the opportunity present itself "*cross-sector collaboration is the organizational vehicle of choice for both*" (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a:734). In order to identify and appropriate such opportunities CSR collaborations with NGOS needs to move beyond philanthropy and generic trade-offs. Porter & Kramer (2006) focus is on redirecting business, away from the myopic view of the tension between business and society. Instead society as a whole is recommend moving towards the opportunities of creating shared values across sectors, identifying shared values and linked interest between companies' core operations and NGOs strides towards social progress. This direction will mutual reinforce economic and social progress for both private sector and societies prosperity. The fundamental reasoning of shared value is ground in the acknowledging of the interdependency between the private sector and society:

*"[A] healthy society creates expanding demand for business as more human needs are met and aspirations grow. Any business that pursue its ends at the expense of the society in which it operates will find its success to be illusory and ultimately temporary. At the same time, a healthy society needs successful companies"*

*(Porter & Kramer, 2006:83)*

In a later publication, Porter & Kramer (2011) continues to elaborate upon their coined term of *shared value* creation through cross-sector collaborations. In this later work they bring examples of successful CSR cases, wherein corporations have moved away from their early responsive practices into strategical CSR programs. This exemplifies the re-evaluation private sector actors have gone through during the

last years, which shows the opportunities within CSR. Doing so corporations needed to expand their view upon the mutual benefits of value creation for and with society. The insight of this new social value comprehension in the private sector is considered by researchers to be on-going process as the shared value approach in CSR is within its genesis. Van Tulder, et al. (2015) also describes this CSR approach in collaboration with NGOs as in its build-up phase wherein enhanced social impact of efficient and effective social program management are in being under scrutiny.

The private sectors process of re-evaluation of how values in CSR can be repositioned is a process which also need additional attention within that of co-creating value in the context of cross-sector collaboration. Actors of these partnerships need to both expand their understanding of how the other defines value, as the corporations' view upon value and value creation agenda differs from that of NGOs. The triple bottom line is often used to represent the inclusion of a broader conceptual understanding of value as social and environmental values, in addition to economic value. Corporations' reason of redefining value in their cross-sector collaborations is derived out the notion of additional relevant stakeholders beyond the investors, other stakeholders which contributes to perceived value created; such as the consumers, the employees, communities, governments and environment (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016). Strategical CSR becomes highly more relevant to private sector when value and performance is being viewed as a triple bottom line where shared value can be created. In extension the utilizing cross-sector partnerships also becomes more relevant, with the aims to leverage additional perspectives upon value creation.

Two business areas which Porter & Kramer (2011) exemplifies as good appropriation of shared value creation are procurement and supporting business clustering. Shared value within procurement offers increased values to the suppliers as their prosperity is considered a direct benefit for the company and their extending value creation. Corporations of today's society have a tradition wherein they instead aim to pressure the suppliers' prices which is benefits gained of the short-term but on long-term its effects suppliers negatively and which ultimately means major opportunity costs for the corporations. Shared values within supporting business clustering can have positive effects on companies' value chains. Business clusters within the communities' corporations runs their operations means supporting suppliers as well as supporting the community's infrastructure. For example, this can mean that corporations actively identify issue with the local communities' public services in order to strengthen their value chain downstream.

### 2.3.1 Five Elements of Collective Impact

Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) have further evolved the approach of shared value from Porter & Kramer (2006, 2011) adding their concept of addressing CSR through that of an ecosystem when creating shared values. This means engaging in cross-sector collaborations to bring social progress. They describe several success stories of companies initiating multiple cross-sector collaborations, wherein they

managed to strategically address complex societal issues which are tightly connected to their core operations.

Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) argue that the key factors of these success stories were connected to the mobilization of the ecosystem surrounding these societal issues. They underline that to achieve enhanced value creation in CSR partnerships companies need to include more than just several actors as all stakeholders should be involved if the collaboration is going to have the effective capacity to address the societal need. Through the ecosystem corporations can deliver what Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) call collective impact.

There are five key elements of successful impact according to Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) (see figure 3). These key elements are argued to enable what they call collective impact, in other words impact on a broad scale which are lasting. The first element focuses upon the establishment of *a common agenda* which should contain a shared vision of the multi-collaboration. The common agenda will function as the pivot point of the value creative operations. Emphasize is here put on full inclusion as all collaborators needs to be considered and heard as the whole ecosystem are to take part.

Secondly a *shared measure system* is needed to evaluate the activities decided upon within the shared agenda. This is vital as collaborators need to agree and evaluate the joint mission's progress together. These two key elements are assessed by Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) as the most vital elements for the collaboration's inception. They will naturally be better enabled as collaborators come to a shared understanding of both the social issue and the collaborations mission which is regulated by the creation of a common agenda. Furthermore, collaborative operations are recommended to *mutually reinforce activities* and allocate the missions activities to partners which holds the most appropriate assets and capacity to carry them out. The distribution of activities amongst partners should hence also efficiently complement each other to create collective impact. *Constant communication* between partners is needed as the activities are continuously evaluated and judged to align with the established common agenda. Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) lastly argue that a *dedicated backbone support* is needed to assure effectivity and efficiency of the endeavour. This function

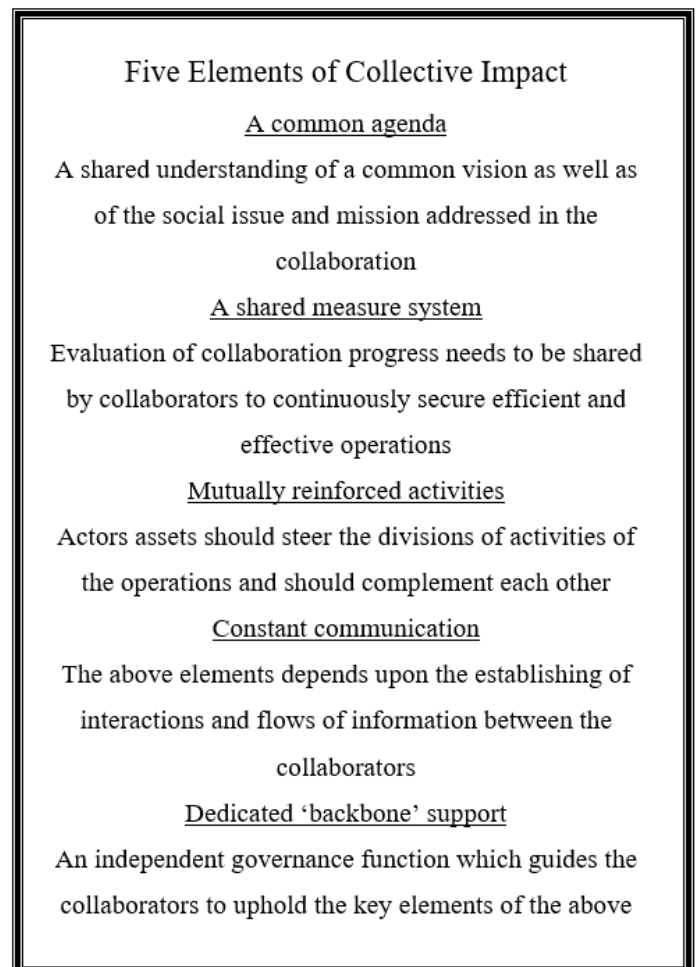


Figure 3 - Five Elements of Collective Impact. Source: Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016.

should be kept separate from other functions of the collaboration and be responsible of guiding the other elements into place.

Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) five elements requires an open communication and trust to be established between partners. This can show to be something of a bottleneck as cross-sector partnerships develop the above partnerships elements. Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) emphasize upon a dedicated backbone support aligns with Simpson, et al. (2011) which emphasizes the importance of governance mechanisms when establishing collaborations. Governance mechanisms enables better structure and support ideological convergence, which Simpson, et al. (2011) argue result in increased goal attainments. Simpson, et al. (2011) also pose that this can be a major challenge in cross-sector collaborations as corporations are prone to use formal governance mechanisms and NGOs tend to use informal governance mechanisms. Informal governance mechanisms are a valuable approach for NGOs in their work in their relationship to communities which they tend to bring back into cross-sector partnerships. It is also argued that informal governance often involves more trust and information spreading which can lead to increased efficiency of the partnerships (Simpson, et al. 2011). Developing trust and understanding of motives between partners is therefore vital for cross-sector partnerships to even get started. This is something which will be addressed below.

### 2.3.2 Value Frame Fusion

Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) argues that the theory of shared value is missing the conceptual dimension of what collaborative values are as shared value does not entail how to find common ground only that it is important to accomplish. It is further argued that such conceptual knowledge is especially crucial in cross-sector value creation as these collaborations traditionally acts independently without co-creative practices which will limit their advancement progress. The essences of this comes down to how co-creation of value becomes defined, and how value within the context of the partnership is framed.

The conceptual value context can be divided into two aspects, that of the *value types* and *value sources* (which will be further explained below). This knowledge makes it possible to proactively identify value types and sources in the context of the specific collaboration which can support the actors of finding common ground. It also allows strategical CSR to become an active part of the corporate's core business strategy, if private sector is to proactively evolve their CSR to involve value co-creation. In the same way it allows NGOs to realize the co-creative benefits of utilizing the support of the private sector other than their traditional money or product donations (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a).

Collaborators can enable the process of establishing a common ground through identify what types of values and sources of values to initiate the partnerships upon. This includes uncovering what how partners separately frame value, that is to say what value frame they act upon. In order to do so actors which pursues co-creation of value must commit to a process of merging their different mind-frames. This is again something which Kramer & Porter (2011) miss out on as they define shared value as the following:

*“[S]hared value can be defined as policies and operating practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities... ...governments and NGOs begin to think more in value terms, their interest in collaborating with business will inevitably grow.” (Kramer & Porter, 2011:6)*

What is evident from above quote of Porter & Kramer (2011) is that their foremost emphasize resides within the private sector’s point of view as they departure from the notion that it is the responsibility of governments and NGOs to assimilated into their value frame and understanding of value, that of economic value.

Van Tulder, et al. (2015:2) emphasize that the key aspect of cross-sector collaborations is the requirement of *“developing a shared understanding about the meaning of impact in partnerships”* which sound much like common ground but instead entails of an integration between the two sectors mind-sets and value frames. The term of shared value as a concept is arguably originating in a context wherein social value is subordinated into the means of reaching the creation of economic value. Porter & Kramer (2011) do address social value’s importance, but never ventures far into the aspect of the consequences of societies growing interdependency in their theory building. A sector’s belief of independency will evidently also mean missed opportunities of innovation as the economic value frame and social value frame continues to exist separate from one another in a divergent state.

Austin & Seitanidi (2012b) argue that the subsequent action needed in cross-sector collaborations, as they have developed a shared understanding, is to deploy a *frame fusion process*. They refer to this process as the forging of the partnerships new value frame which main function are to motivate and discipline the collaborations interaction. Collaborations which are operating under a fused collaborative value frame are able to improve their build-up of interaction and synergistic values:

*“Value frame fusion plays an important role in the alignment of perceptions and creation of a mutual language by developing a vocabulary of meaning” (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b:940)*

The mind-set of what value is or the enacted value frame of an organisation, directly effects the process of the value creation. A shared understanding of one another in a cross-sector collaboration is thus not enough, actors also need to adjust to one another to effectively co-create value. This can be achieved as the collaborators converge their separate value frames into a collaborative value frame, i.e. that of the NGOs social value frame and the private sectors economic value frame (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b).

The fusion of an economic value frame and social value frame is explained as something which is derived out of several enabling factors of a cross-sector collaboration. The main enablers of this fusion process are a well-established dialog to nourish shared understanding, a good organisational fit and a previous experience of collaborative success of creation of social values. These enablers give rise

to important synergistic values within the collaboration which allows innovative solutions of social issues to emerge and in turn into the deliverance of social progress and collective impact to society (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b; Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016).

The enablers of communication and understanding reaches culminates as the collaboration reaches a status of *institutionalization*. This means that collaboration is no longer dependent upon specific key individuals as an institutionalization is characterised by both organisational and personnel familiarity throughout the partners organisation, which includes the collaboration's social intent and mission, as well as value creation procedures (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b). Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) describes this as a process where multiple and accumulated interactions, which causes partners to reach shared understanding and ultimately institutionalization partnership. The process of institutionalization allows information to be transformed into knowledge, and knowledge to transform into capabilities. Building knowledges and capabilities are derived out of iterative interaction exchanges of information within the collaboration. The collaborators over time will thus create tacit knowledge about each other which in turn creates improved communications. Austin & Seitanidi (2012b:940) reference this to as "*speaking the same language*". Capabilities continues to be formed as more knowledge is created parallel to the accumulation of interaction and build-up of synergy, which will bring their integrated thinking and understanding even further.

Important to highlight is that the act of a fusion entails the process of persevering the distinct aspects of the organisations separate value frames which allows partners to maintain their different organisational identities. Austin & Seitanidi (2012b) explain that if a collaboration attempts of frame fusion fails, collaborators can still act on divergent frames but it will mean a loss of opportunities. Cross-sector partnerships founded upon divergent frames will give rise to conflicts during operations, subsequently the conflicts resolution will determine the level of value co-creation. The level of the linked interests and organisational fit of the collaborators will continuously shape the operations potential of maintaining co-creation and capturing value.

## **2.4 The Fundament of Cross-sector Collaborations**

One of the more referenced frameworks of the discourse on managing value creation in cross-sector collaborations are that of Austin & Seitanidi (2012a; 2012b). The framework is built on a thorough literature review covering the large parts of theoretical discourse and several conceptual models are merged into forming the components of larger framework of how to manage value in cross-sector collaborations. In total they include four components in their framework of frameworks. This thesis will focus upon the two first component of the CVC framework, as all four components are not relevant for the scope of this thesis.

The framework by Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) is called *The Collaborative Value Creation Framework* (CVC) and builds its base upon the first component. The first component is about conceptual identifying different values types and how these are values are sourced in a cross-sector

partnership. Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) explains that a better understanding of the collaborative values, which forms the foundation of the partnerships, enables actors to conceptually interlink their organisational value frames. In the process of identifying value types and their source in partnerships, allows partners increased potential of successfully preform a value frame fusion, and in turn to enable enhanced social impact. This aspect is important for the collaborators as without understanding the abstract value conceptions the process of their intentional value co-creation will be limited and most likely inferior.

#### 2.4.1 Four Different Value Types

Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) have classified four types of values, which are: *Transferred resource values*; *Associational values*; *Interaction values*; and *Synergetic values*; (se figure 4 for brief overview).

The “*transferred resource value*”, denotes value which is acquired from a resource which has been transferred from one actor to another in the collaboration. Transfers can be multiple times or a single transaction. The significance of the value which the resource holds is contextual, as it depends upon the values nature. For example, a company donating funds to an NGO is a situation wherein capital is the transferred resource value. The transferred resource value thus addresses the aspect of the resource being either depreciable (i.e. cash or product donations) or durable (skills or knowledge learned). Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) explain that value renewal in collaborations is essential for the long-term collaboration perspective which means that repeated transfers between partners are therefore one approach to keeping the collaboration maintained. If collaborations involve a single transfer of resource value which also is a highly durable resource, like a specific knowledge, the collaboration will surely be short lived.

The “*associational value*” produced in a collaboration relates to a benefit of being associated with the other organisation’s reputation or brand, as well as credibility and legitimacy. For example, a company collaborating with a child’s rights organisation will be associated with them and be perceived as socially responsible in the area of children’s welfare. The child’s rights organisation can in turn also acquire more credibility as of their association with an established company’s brand, which can increase the NGOs visibility as an actor and make their social cause and agenda more visible. Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) argue that associational values in

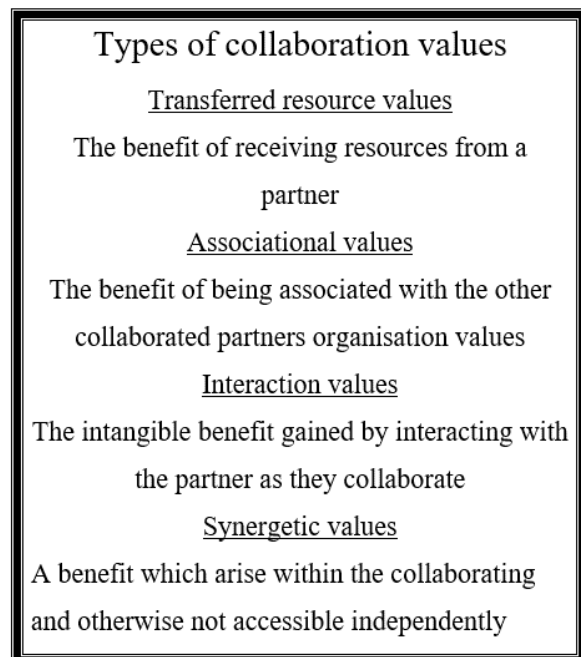


Figure 4 -Types of Collaboration Values. Source: Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a.



a cross-sector collaboration is dependent upon the organisational fit between the partners. Aspects such as the partners organisational structure and how it is governed are important for the organisational fit in a collaboration between a company and an NGO.

The “*interaction value*” is a much less comprehend value because of its intangible but mundane nature, created within the process of collaborating. This type of value is based on the notion that collaborations rests upon certain levels of interaction which subsequently are values which tacitly accumulates as the relationship develops between collaborators. This means that partners become more familiar with each other’s organisational conduct and inner culture which otherwise can be hard access. Most importantly the interaction frequency and intensity allow the collaborators to obtain insights about one another which intrinsically supports their value co-creation processes (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). This aspect links to that of Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) which emphasize constant communication in shared value creation between partners and is the abstract concept which makes partners establish a common agenda.

The fourth and last value type is that of “*synergistic values*”. Collaborations as a concept rests upon the premise that actors can draw benefits and advantages from one another and accomplish more together than they would independently. Synergistic values are the conceptual result out of the joint innovation that arise as the collaborators deploy their distinct resources in different combination. The emphasizes in this value type described by Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) is the collaborators transformation of values through synergy enabling social values to produce economic values and vice versa creating a value circle.

#### 2.4.2 The Sources of Collaboration Values

Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) identify four fundamental sources of collaboration values, sources which produce the above four value types. The different sources of values are much dependent upon the resource context. These are; the nature of the resource; the complementarity of the resource; the directionality and use of the resource; and lastly the linked interest between the collaborators (se figure 5).

The “*resource nature*” influence the potential value of a resource, which can on one end be of a generic nature and on the other of an organisational-specific nature. A generic resource nature is often that of money or commodities which can easily be offered by any organisation. Organisations which are specialized on delivering certain services or products

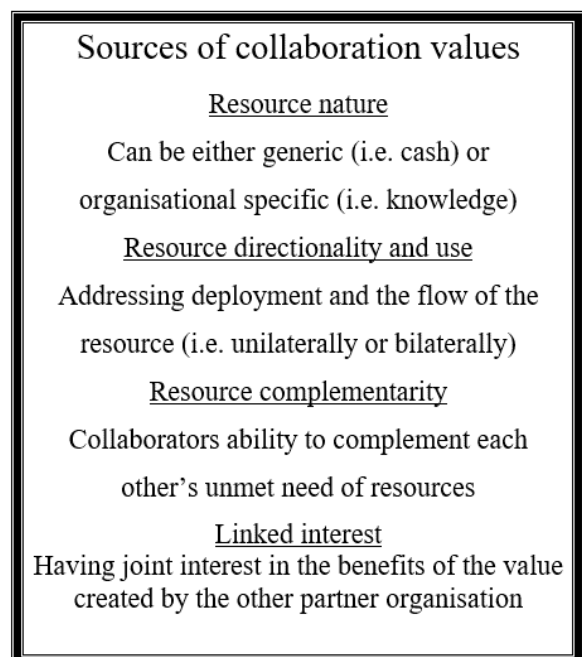


Figure 5 - Sources of collaboration values. Source: Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a.

which are rare are naturally more organisational-specific in its resource nature. An organisational-specific resource nature can also be of a more intangible nature, such as an access to a market or a certain reputation which helps the organisation to mobilize added value creation. Knowledge is often labelled as organisational-specific value source, but this depends upon how diffused this knowledge is and how readily accessible this value source is in the market.

The value source of “*resource complementarity*” addresses what often forms the bases of the collaboration and can simply be put as the organisation’s complementary needs of the other one’s resources. Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) describes that the resource complementarity is dependent upon the organisational fit between the collaborators as this influences the appropriation of value that stems from resource complementarity. A coffee company partnering with a bakery can be viewed as sourcing value from complementarity resource.

The “*resource directionality and use*” is the third mentioned source of collaboration values. This aspect is referring to if the flow of the resource’s direction, being one-sided unilateral or a mutual transaction through bilateral or reciprocal exchanges. An example of a one-sided resource directionality is that of a philanthropic partnership which unilateral donates money to NGOs. The NGO is not giving anything back in exchange, but the company will still gain associational value. If there are conditions involved in this exchange which for example would mean the use of the NGOs logo we would instead speaking of a bilateral partnership. The reciprocal directionality in a partnership involves an expectancy of something in return which is not decided upon when or how. This could be that the company might use the relationship to gain future advice on how to operate in specific community which the NGO have credibility with (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a).

The fourth and last source of collaboration value is the “*linked interest*” which is unique as its not directly addressing the resources context. In cross-sector collaborations Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) underlines the importance of understanding the potential of linked interest between one another as collaborators. Realizing the linked interest means understanding how value is perceived in the collaboration and subsequently how value can and is being created. Identifying these kinds of sources of value in turn also means that the actor will be able to assess if the value exchange is justifiable which is important if a collaboration is to evolve and sustain. Linked interest closely reminds of that which Porter & Kramer (2006;2011) denotes as a realization of shared value opportunity.

Defining the incentives of companies to collaborate are an important aspect of what kind of partnership the NGOs can expect of a company (Simpson, et. al., 2011). These include objectives of advancing the organisation brand reputation, benefits derived out of employee volunteer programs, stakeholder relationship building, and sourcing innovation (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). This also means that companies and NGOs partnerships can have very different meaning. The objective can vary largely as it depends upon how well the collaborators realizes each other’s assets and linked interests. Organisations can thus partner up with one another to form either generic partnerships which uses independent value creation wherein the results often hold low levels of innovation. Porter & Kramer

(2006) descriptions of responsive CSR strategies wherein companies and NGOs form cross-sector collaborations can be considered as independent value creation upon divergent value frames. On the other hand, cross-sector partnerships can actively aim to establish advance and more integrated partnerships wherein they co-create values which give rise to synergistic values, this often leads to innovation and larger potential of delivering social impact. The major difference lies within both partners' knowledge and ability of identifying the above value types and sources within their partnerships.

## **2.5 Four Types of Partnerships Across Sectors**

The second component of the CVC framework focus upon defining different partnership types. The definition of what the cross-sector partnership constitute out of is dependent upon the above different types of values and the sources of values according to Austin & Seitanidi (2012a). In this context the less evolved types of partnership are those when companies donate money to support NGOs operations, which brings generic benefits to the both of them. The more evolved collaborations, which has the possibility of accomplishing broad societal impact, are where the actors integrate operations together using organisation specific resources (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; 2012b; Van Tulder et al., 2015).

The partnership can evolve from one type into another which happens as interaction values are being accumulated over time as they are having meetings and dealings with one another. This allows the collaboration to evolve as they become more familiar and have better information and knowledge about one another. It enables the collaborators to move closer to one another and thus in the process are able to discovery new types of values and sources of values, forming new constellations of resources in value creation. The build-up of interaction values and realization linked interests creates potential of innovation and thus enables synergistic values which give rise to even more interaction values to be accumulated (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a).

Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) defines four different types cross-sector collaborations; *Philanthropic; Transactional; Integrative; and Transformational*. These are not considered as static states but loosely defined over time. The four types of collaborations will be further elaborated upon below. These are also relevant as to how they add to the perspective of shared values and ecosystems as explained from previous sections (Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016; Porter & Kramer, 2011).

### **2.5.1 Philanthropic Collaboration**

The *philanthropic* collaboration is the historically more traditional partnership type between the private sector and the NGO-sector. In these constellations there is a company donor and an NGO recipient. Hence, philanthropic collaborations depend upon the value type of transferred resources and associational value creation. Often these collaboration focus upon capital and product transfers which means the value nature source also is generic and depreciable. The sources of values in philanthropic partnerships thus also entails low complementarity and weak linked interests.

Philanthropic collaborations are often used by companies as an alternative to of carrying out their own CSR activities as they do not have their CSR-department or the know-how to operate their own CSR-programs. The NGOs can give them access to a socially responsible operation and are interested in having them funded. A source of resource complementarity arises as the corporation lacks CSR and which can be accessed through the NGO if they transfer resources to the them, funds they need. The associational value obtained through this collaboration is also important as it makes both more credible in the general public eyes to be associated with each other. Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) points out the rather generic exchanges of these collaboration as no co-creation takes place and only enables the actors to continue with their existing operations without additional value added. The company could in theory support any NGO and the NGO can get funding from any company. Since the partnership does not involve any operations there are little *interaction values* and no *synergistic values* being created.

### 2.5.2 Transactional Collaboration

A *transactional collaboration* is considered a more developed collaboration compared to a philanthropic since there is a focus on the mutual exchange of resources. An example of a transactional collaboration can be an NGO offering to child's rights certification to companies in exchange of payment for this knowledge. This entails resource values being *transferred* with a bilateral *directionality*. The NGO benefit of the *associational value* created as the social cause of the NGO becomes more visible and legitimate through such an arrangement. The company also receives *associational value* as socially responsible, caring for the well-being of children. The NGO's certification can be classified as an organisational-specific resource of knowledge and thus also durable in its value nature. The payment of money is on the other hand a resource which by *nature* generic and *depreciable*. The renewal of this kind of cross-sector collaboration is thus hard since the NGO offers a durable resource in exchange for a depreciable. Interaction values created in this specific example are much higher compared to the philanthropic donation since a certification offers the actors the potential of getting to know one another, but in a limited context.

Another common transactional cross-sector collaboration strategy is logo licensing agreements, which also involves a bilateral directional flow, the NGO gets money in exchange of the license of their logo used by a company. The organisational fit is very much in focus in such a partnership as the transactional collaborations are in general tuned into associational value exchanges. This is important since it brings divided risk between the organisations of being negatively associated with one another (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). A child's rights NGO needs to be careful about who they license their logo to since this partner might act against child's rights or the NGO's core values. In the same way the company can be negative associated through the use of the logo of an NGO which later becomes discredited. The impending risk is though primarily held by the NGO as its means of funding is highly linked to their credibility and the general public image.

An important highlight of the transactional collaboration is that it almost never integrates the end-beneficiary even if values are indirectly created for them. Focus are often upon the indirect support of a social cause as the NGO gets funds or other which support them to run operations. The value creation of transactional collaborations can to some extent be co-creative but without any larger impact on society. Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) describe that one of the better examples of such a transactional collaboration is corporate volunteer programs. These programs can directly involve children as employees from the company volunteer to work with kids during work hours. In exchanged the company gets an increase moral and a good employer reputation, which links to the reputational justification of CSR elaborated by Porter & Kramer (2006). The greatest benefit created for the NGOs through corporate volunteer programs are that they are able to informally diffuse the knowledge of their social cause (such as child's rights) through the company volunteers and in extension further into the company. Still, the resource of labour is classified as generic resource as these don't bring any specific knowledge. Still, corporate volunteer programs can hold future potential value for the NGO as it allows them to generate interaction values with company employees which in turn might influence the company board to further develop the collaboration with the NGO.

### 2.5.3 Integrative Collaborations

The philanthropic and transactional cross-sector collaborations are considered more basic forms of collaborating since the main value creation is carried out separately by the partners. Carrying out co-creative value processes through integrative operation is thus considered a more advance form of collaboration. Value Co-creation in cross-sector partnerships are what is called an *integrative collaboration* and is defined by the collaborator's co-creational approach as they are more integrated with one another in their pursuit of creating social progress. Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) argue that these collaborations are realized through intensive and frequent interactions which have accumulated high amounts of *interaction values*. This accumulation enables them to better realize each other's assets which supports their continued value co-creation. Such collaborations demand actors to act upon (1) integrative understanding, (2) mutually deployed strategies, and (3) a defined shared view of the social mission to function efficiently and effectively (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a).

Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) describes that integrative collaborations often are descendants of transactional collaborations which have developed beyond its previous partnership scope as some of their operations have become integrated. The NGO could in this fashion use transactional (or philanthropic) collaborations as springboards with the intent of advancing their collaborations into more integrated creation. Austin & Seitanidi (2012a:212b) describes this evolvement as a demanding effort of due diligence. It requires proactive measures of relationship building and good organisational fit so that interaction values can accumulate to support integrated value creation.

*“[C]oming together of perceptions of value, reflects the distinct evolution of each sector's approaches to value creation. Each sector understanding the other's*

*unfolding conceptions and approaches to value creation...” (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a:731)*

Paramount in the initial phase of the integrative collaboration is the need of mutually acceptance and openness of the partners differences of farming value. Austin & Seitanidi (2012b) mean that a pre-conceptual understanding of each other’s value frames is what enables them to get pass initial road bumps. Subsequently the partners need to merge their value frames (as described in section 2.1.2.) to enable integration of value creation. At this point they can the partnerships operations function are integrated within shared views on how to move from the social issue to a formulated social mission which allows increased social impact. This aspects of a shared view and relationship building relates to Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) conclusions of the need of a common agenda and constant communication.

In practice the evolvement from a transactional into an integrative collaboration often happens as the collaboration is nourished by their previous success as partners (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). In turn this means more chances of synergetic outlets to be channelled back into the collaboration since trust levels and predictability have been established trough their experience of each other’s organisational structure and governance. An additional aspect of integrative collaborations is that the level of trust and interaction has been enough well-established to be able to sustain continuing synergetic value creation. This setting enables the collaborative operations to operate on an open agenda wherein the collaboration has no end-date. The collaboration renewal can in these situations continuously be established because of their integrated nature (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). This is also the reason why organisational fit is important, if there are an organisational alignment the learn curve of one another will be less steep. If the organisational fit between partners is assessed from the inception of the collaboration and found good it induces a greater potential to move faster through these different types of partnering. This means if partners are well-synced it will catalyst them to move quicker and with greater ease through road bumps of the collaboration stages (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b).

The bilateral resource’s flows of an integrated collaboration also mean that actors are able to independently understand the potential of the other actor’s complementary and specific resources before they are formulated. The same process goes for their linked interest, as it means they will benefit of the others value appropriation motivating them to drive the co-creative collaboration further. The concept of *linked interest* is thus similar to shared value as the value created for one partner is value which can also be used by the other partner, sharing and benefiting of the value created by all partners. The integration will evidently call for new views on challenges and issues which feeds innovation through the effects of the creation even more synergistic values.

The integrated collaboration demands insight into the specific societal issue at hand, where the stakeholders obviously need to be heard and included to achieve. This also means that there is an explicit inclusion of the stakeholder in the value creation besides the partners pursuit of accessing benefits from one another. This is the main difference of the integrative partnership type compared to the

philanthropic and transactional partnership types. Austin & Seitanidi (2012b) argues that a shared understanding of the social issue and mission also means that the corporations CSR practices will have to be relevant to the companies' core operations to be able to form an integrated collaboration with an NGO. The shared understanding of the partnerships needs to be diffused throughout the organisation to enable the co-creation of values. This means that a diffusion amongst most of the organisations' personnel, as well as on having a policy direction level which reflects the shared understanding of the social issue the collaboration is focusing upon.

#### 2.5.4 Transformational Collaboration

The continuing of integration between collaborators, as more interaction and synergetic values are accumulated, ultimately means that the collaboration will reach a status of being *transformational*. This is when the partnership goes beyond an integrative focus and further into the minds of the end-beneficiaries of the social mission described in their common agenda. Besides having a well-developed and integrated understanding of one another as partners and organisations, they are able to integrate their value creation process to transcend into the mind of the communities they work for. This collaboration type thus has the power of transforming society according to Austin & Seitanidi (2012a). The transformational collaboration is described as difficult to reach and is pointed out by Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) as more of something of a concept to strive towards. They still argue that this partnerships type to occurring at times of high levels of dynamic flow between collaborators.

*“[P]artners may consciously decide to embark onto a transformational collaboration; however, we assume that in most cases social change or social innovation potential emerges within the process” (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b:941)*

The collaborations which does reach a transformational collaboration have evolved together to be able to realize and conceptualize new frontiers of societal change and in the process they are creating transformational change for society. Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) describes this advance form of collaboration as a stage where they not only share an understanding of the social issue using a common social mission but have evolved even further into shared learnings of how to approach societal issue effectively which equally benefit the both.

The transformational collaboration can thus only be developed as the collaborators decentralize their control as they are developing relationships with and include the communities into the creation processes. Vital is hence that stakeholders are able to voice their thoughts and support of their social missions the collaborators embark on. This state needs to continuously be upheld as the collaborators need to also accumulate interaction values with the end-beneficiaries. This needs to be made possible through feedback loops and operation checkpoints in a bottoms-up perspective (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) emphasise the vast complexity of achieving something like this which hence also means the need of collaborative networks within the collaboration. The

transformational collaboration relates to the ecosystem concept by Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) in the pursuit of collective impact as Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) also argues that the transformational collaboration will come to involve other external organisations ensuring better progress and thus expand further into a potential multi-sector collaboration.

## **2.6 Brief Summery**

The above background covers a range literature reviews of concepts from different authors. It started out reviewing the history of CSR to better grasp its responsive practices and how the private sector justifies social responsibility from an economic point of view (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Understanding the NGOs background history is also vital as cross-sector partnerships started developing further from the increasing attention upon CSR and the private sectors negative influences upon society (Lodsgård & Aagaard, 2017; Simpson et al., 2011). One of the main take-a-ways are the opportunities within viewing CSR as something strategic and having the ability of producing shared values, if value is appropriated in close connection to companies' core operations (Porter & Kramer, 2006; 2011). These collaborations have later come to be enhanced into co-creation of value through a set of the enablers, such as establishing a common agenda and constant communication. If carried out in the context of an ecosystem of multiple stakeholders, cross-sector collaboration can achieve collective impact (Porter & Kramer, 2011; Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016).

The framework of Austin & Seitanidi (2012a;2012b) emphasize the conceptual empowerment of identifying the fundament of cross-sector collaboration. Meaning what types of collaboration values the partnerships is dealing with and how they are sourced, which leads us to the categorization of four different types of partnerships. In figure (X) below there is summary the concept by Austin & Seitanidi (2012a; 2012b) to support the understanding of the full theoretical context of how they relate to on another.

In the figure collaborations are organised into two columns, the traditional and the new forms of cross-sector collaborations. The arrows between the different types of partnerships represents that these are not static but can moves along the spectrum from the right to the left and back again. The transformational partnership box is displayed with dashed lines since it is seldom highly unstable state of a partnership. The different types of partnerships have descriptions attached below them on how they relate to the collaboration value types and value sources, these are also not static but represent a lose description of the value context of that partnership type.

The aspect of value frame fusion is represented by the independent versus value co-creation as well as how social value versus economic value are centred in the actors' value frame mind-set. The figure below organises these two concepts into the first row describing the value frame status. To the right independent and thus divergent value frame enactment; and to the left interdependent and co-creation of values in a conversion of both social and economic values enacting upon an adjusted



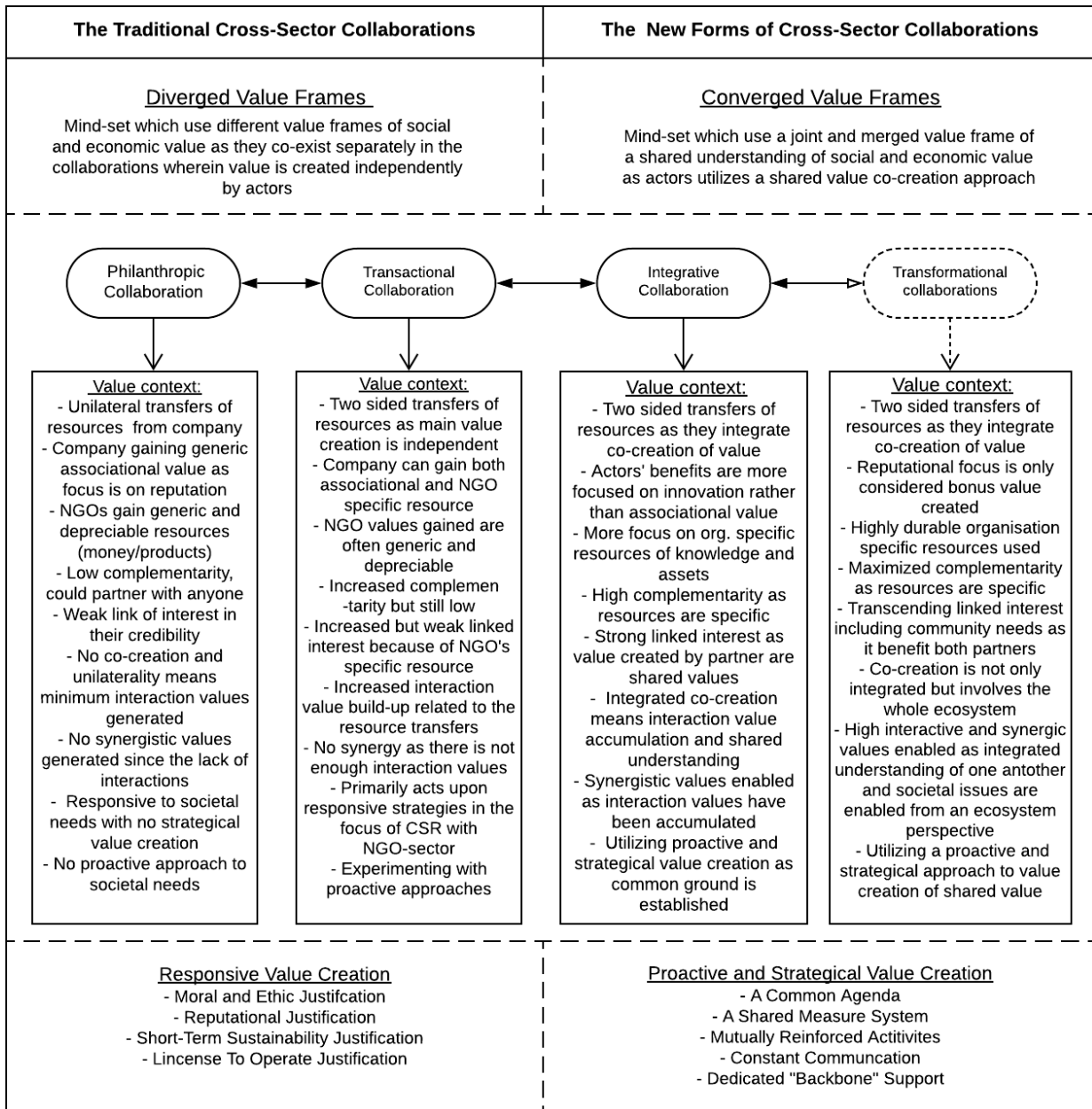


Figure 6 – Illustration of how literature review theory are merged together. Source: Author

collaborative value frame. It is indicated by the diagram that the traditional collaboration acts upon divergent value frames while integrative and transformational acts upon converged value frames.

The bottom row addresses the enablers of cross-sector collaborations, organized either into the left are the traditional forms which acts upon the four CSR justifications of collaborating, to the right are the new forms of collaboration which acts upon the five elements of collective impact.

The other diagrams showed throughout this review can also be viewed once more below as well in the last appendix (2) in the back of this thesis so it can be easily accessed when reading the rest of this thesis.

### 3. Methodology

How the researcher formulates the initial research question are said to steer the whole research endeavour, as it should guide the subsequent decisions of the methodology used. In turn the research question per se are recommended by Bryman & Bell (2015) to touch upon the researchers own interests and resources in combination with a potential to uncover previously novel insight about a specific field. It is within this spirit I have formulated this thesis research to be guided by the following research questions:

- *How does Save the Children Sweden manage their cross-sector partnerships with actors of the private sector?*
- *How are Save the Children Sweden managing challenges within value creation within cross-sector partnerships with actors of the private sector?*

#### 3.1 Research strategy

A qualitative strategy has been adopted in this thesis research as it is considered appropriate when the research is addressing a topic which is rather novel and moving about in the outer-rim of a research discourse yet to be explored (Bryman & Bell, 2015). On one hand, the field of cross-sector collaboration, between NGOs and private sector, have been an increasingly discussed topic in research as of the two last decades. On the other hand, what mostly been focused upon so far is the specific context of *whether* these collaborations should be established and if these collaborations are successful strategies of value creation to bring social progress. Thus, the discourses and researchers have focused on *how* and for *whom* these collaborations are creating value. This aspect of the discourse has become the primary interest first in recent years (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a;2012b; Lodsgård & Aagaard, 2016; Van Tulder, et al., 2015). There are studies elaborating on how cross-sector collaboration successfully co-creates values which in turn brings social progress, but they have been few especially when it comes to establishing communication and understanding between the cross-sector partners. Business effects upon human rights and their CSR activities around human rights are also few, according to Collins (2014). What seems to be contextual and theoretical gap are how these cross-sector collaborations are operating in connection to child's rights issues (Collins, 2014; Berlan, 2016).

Qualitative strategies subsequently often imply the use of an inductive approach as emphasizes are put upon collection of data which can later expand the current understandings of a research field (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This have also been the case in this thesis as the objective have been to uncover specific practices within a case which would illustrate and further enlighten how real-life cross-collaborations within the context of child's rights are operationalized (Siggelkow, 2007). The related context of uncovering newness is also better suited in qualitative approaches since they allow the researcher the manoeuvrability of discovering new leads during the data collection process (Bryman & Bell, 2015). An inductive approach has thus been applied in this thesis in the sense that a preliminary literature review was conducted before collecting data to afterwards be understood in a broader context

of existing theory of the discourse from multiple sources set into a child's rights context. This is what Siggelkow (2007) address as a research embarkment of an open-mind and not an empty-mind through the inductive approach of a case-study.

Using a quantitative approach to answer this thesis' research questions would arguably be found inadequate as such strategies is generally considered to focus upon numbers (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Qualitative strategies are more tuned into a focus upon words enabling data which can entail in-depth insight about a phenomenon, which seems suitable in the search of how cross-sector collaborations operates.

### **3.2 Research design**

A case-study design has been applied in this thesis since the research questions overlaying objective have been to collect illustrative data on the phenomenon of how child's rights organisations are successfully collaborating with the private sector as they have inherent different views upon the opportunity of creating value which brings social progress beneficial for both sectors. Siggelkow (2007) argues that case-studies are a great way of complementing pure conceptual constructs with illustrative insights as a case offers more than mere speculative arguments. Through case-study design the researcher are enabled to illustrate the unique nature of a case which haven't been covered in existing theory or which even contradict theory. Hence, a case-study design is a suitable research approach of this specific inductive endeavour and can bringing some nuance to the limited field of child's rights in cross-sector collaborations. Siggelkow (2007) also argues the inspirational aspect of the case-study design which thus through an inductive theory generation can shed light on limited aspects of existing theory. These two remarks of are found persuasive in the context of this thesis as these enabling aspects align with the notion of this thesis research questions formulation and qualitative approach. This notes the aim to collect new insight using existing cross-sector collaboration theory as a springboard into the unexplored context of a co-creating values within the child's rights area of society.

Furthermore, choosing a case-study design aligns well with a qualitative strategy as qualitative data of depth can easily be accumulated and built upon in a case setting to understand more complex contexts (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Research questions which aim to understand *how* something works, are well appropriated by a case-study design as this thesis intentions were to conduct an intensive investigation of the specific setting of child's rights in business.

### **3.3 Semi-structured interviews**

The collection of data has been provided through qualitative interviewing using a semi-structured interview guide. The choice of conducting semi-structured interviews was made to meet the need of uncovering novel data and allow increased manoeuvrability during the interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewees themselves to structure their answer in accordance to their social reality with minimized interference (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This gives better access to the pure experience of the interviewees account of the investigated phenomena as it doesn't necessarily follow

the researcher’s preconceptual knowledge of the existing discourse (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The choice of semi-structured interview in this thesis thus provided the flexibility need in order to capture the subjective reality as it is framed and understood by the interviewees. Interviewing is also considered an approach which allows quick access to rich and deep data, which aligns well with previous methodological choices.

Using an unstructured interviewing was deemed potentially inadequate as the interviewees held time-critical job positions with little time to spare. Bryman & Bell (2015) describes that the unstructured interviewing often is conducted over a series of several occasions and which hence can be very time-consuming. Some structure within the interviewing was therefore needed to utilize and extract the most out of the time offered by these interviewees.

### 3.3.1 Interview guide

The interview guide used when collecting data covers several different topics with open-ended questions and can be viewed in appendix 1. It was mainly constructed on aspects derived out of the two main frameworks of Austin & Seitanidi (2012a;2012b) and Van Tulder et al. (2015). As well as a child’s rights focus derived out of Collins (2014) and Berlan (2016).

The structure of the guide was based on how SC are able to manage co-creation in the setting of cross-sector collaborations. This was then supported by adding a searching motives of how SC deal with understanding how their partners frame the value potential of their partnership as well as how they aim to co-realize value. The last row displays five topics which are in many ways integrated into one another which allows both questions about the specific topic to lay a path into another topic, as well as path back to a previous covered topic without the interviewee losing their chain of thought. In figure 7 is the interview guide’s structure illustrated.

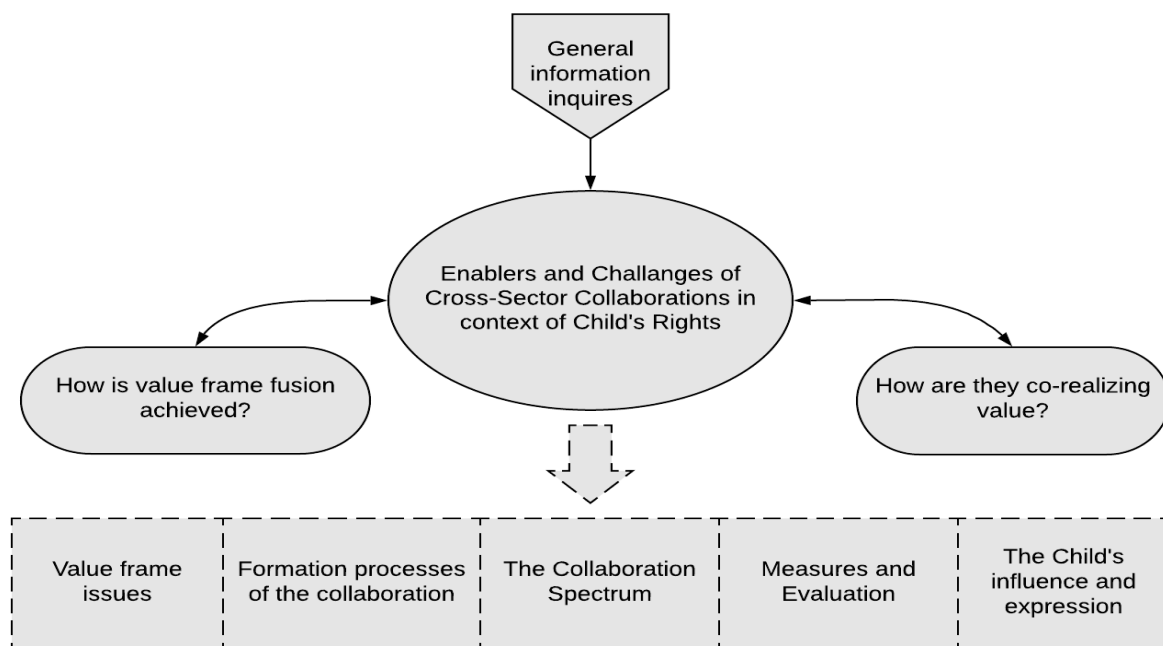


Figure 7 - Structure of interview guide

The interview guide was constructed out of 4 themes of topics and was initially tested on the first interviewee working at the SC west regional office as an organisational developer. In this pilot-test it was concluded that additional aspects were needed as more structure was added to bridge different topics better. This meant adding a sheet of potential questions under every topic which not necessarily would be adequate in the situation but still meant guidance on moving between the topics. The interview guide was then tested again with the same interviewee filling the potential gaps which was considered missed in the first interview.

### **3.4 Sampling process**

The process of sampling in this thesis study encompass two aspects; the selection of the case and the sampling of the interviews within the case organisation. Five interviews were conducted within the case-organisation of Save the Children Sweden between February and April of 2019.

#### 3.4.1 The case selection

The case organisation used in this thesis research is the NGO Save the Children Sweden, a case choice which was partially derived out the authors own experience and access to this organisation and thus having some preconceptual knowledge. Such experience was considered beneficial since the topic investigated holds a certain complexity which was thought to ease the data collection process. Bryman & Bell (2015) argues that the selection of a case should be based upon the opportunity to learn more about an intended phenomenon. Hence, the selection of this particular case was based upon the opportunity to learn more about the child's rights context within Swedish cross-sector collaborations. Siggelkow (2007) refers to the same aspect of case selection, also arguing that the opportunity should hold a certain uniqueness to offer increased conceptual insight of the field. Thus, picking a case randomly would not be sufficient as picking a particular organisation is what offers the opportunity in the first place.

Hence the choice of this particular case was mainly based upon the access to the SC but also on the aspect that they are the largest child's rights organisation in Sweden and in the world with over 100 years of experience (SC, 2019). On these terms it was considered that SC would be the more suitable case organisation to investigate as of their size and status as a prominent child's rights organisation. Furthermore, the constraints of this particular industry make SC the only organisational choice to investigate as there are very few other child's rights organisation to choose from of the proper size in Sweden. The alternative organisations would have been BRIS and The Red Cross. BRIS compared to SC is a much smaller and foremostly not as experienced organisation which thus potentially would hold a less of an opportunity because of the limited scope on this thesis focus on cross-sector collaborations. Red Cross on the other hand is a larger and more experience organisation compared to SC but considered less appropriate since their focus are upon human rights issues, wherein their child's rights operations are a subordinated.

### 3.4.2 Sampling interviews

The selection of interviews within SC were also based on a theoretical sampling combined with a snowball sample. The initial sampling process meant using the previous mentioned preconceptual knowledge and personnel relationship to the organisation.

The research sampling started with contacting an organisation developer at the Gothenburg regional office, as well as the National Director of SC Sweden. Establishing contact with these meant that the sample grew quickly as they referred to additional candidates that might be of interest of the thesis scoop to interview. In this the National Director gave weight to the study which allowed the after-coming sampling process to go smoother as he forwarded the thesis email interview request within the SC to other potential candidates.

The interviewees were all chosen because of their involvement within a partnership context of the SC. The following table contains the five interviewees and their position within the organisation, as well as duration and dates they were carried out:

**Table of Interviewees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Date</b>
SP	Organisation and Partnership Developer of Region West	60 minutes	24 <sup>th</sup> of February
YS	Key Account Manager of National Partnership	76 minutes	14 <sup>th</sup> of March
MH	Key Account Manager of National Partnership	71 minutes	22 <sup>th</sup> of March
OM	National Director of SC Sweden	75 minutes	25 <sup>th</sup> of March
AA	Program Director of PLV	89 minutes	19 <sup>th</sup> of April
MD	Head of Business Development	60 minutes	29 <sup>th</sup> of April

### 3.5 Literature review

The literature review started with a scan of the existing discourse on matters of value creation in the context of cross-sector collaboration using Gothenburg University Library's search engine. Focus in this search where on articles addressing civil sectors collaborations with private sector. Additional articles where searched for on matters of the child's rights context within these collaborations which showed an offer of a rather limited discourse. Several search words were used in different combinations as follows:

- NGO, Non-governmental organisation, NPO, non-profit organisations, and Civil sector

- Value, Value creation, Co-creation and Co-creative
- Business, Company, Corporation, and Private Sector
- Partnership, Cross-sector, Collaboration, Alliance, CSR and Corporate Social Responsibility
- Child's Rights and Children

### **3.6 Data qualitative criteria**

The different research methodological choices of strategy and design described above also comes with some limitations. The focus upon words in qualitative research and in extension the interviewees social reality is also what brings criticisms as the interviewee and the researcher are interpreting the data which thus becomes subjective. Bryman & Bell (2015) further mention that its common amongst qualitative researchers to venture within contexts where they already hold some preconceptual knowledge which further taints the objectiveness of the data, which is true in regards of this thesis.

To mitigate some of the bias subjectivity in this study, the author has throughout the data collection process actively reflected over such matters. All interviews have also been digitally recorded and been summarized using the same words as the interviewees (can be found in Appendix 2). Bryman & Bell (2015) describes that being completely objective is not desirable and neither possible. This study's qualitative research aim is to collect insight of the social realities and not distort and reduced these into numbers or measurable indicators.

The credibility of this study's findings and conclusions have in large been drawn from accounts which can be derived from more than one interviewee, if not this is also noted in the results and analysis section (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Respondent validity has also been ensured as the interviewees have been offered the opportunity to approve the summarized content of the interviews.

Case-study designs have been criticized of lacking transferability and representativeness (Ibid). Arguably these two evaluative measures of quality research can be counter by Siggelkow (2007) reasoning that a case by nature does not have to be transferable or representative if it holds a uniqueness. Thus, even if there is a mere small potential of uncovering and diffusing new standards of how to create value in cross-sector contexts of child's rights, it is thus here argued as enough for this research-study to be found contributory. Moreover, this thesis does not aim to fulfil transferability, which relates to the previous mentioned objectives of this thesis. That of shedding light on the field through illustrative and inspirational insight collected from practices of SC is hence the goal.

#### **3.6.1 Short acknowledgement of pre-conceptual knowledge**

The authors preconceptual understanding of SC are derived out of a 6 years non-professional involvement as a board member in the district of Gothenburg. As explained before this made the opportunity possible to interview some of the participators of this study. The author has no personnel or professional relationships with them whatsoever, and or not positioned in same operations of SC.

What was pre-conceptually known was how some of the partnership strategies were structured and the aspect that is a rather unique approach by a child's rights organisation in Sweden.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

A thematic analysis has been used to reach conclusion about the collected insight and data of the interviews. The analysis has thus been carried out as the raw data have been organized into central themes and subthemes (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Repetition of similar contexts and issues found in the data has been highlighted as they were organized into themes if they were found to relate to this thesis research's endeavour.

Bryman & Bell (2015) argues that recordings of conceptual procedures of thematic analysis are academically underdeveloped but highly popular and applicable on a wide variety of types of qualitative data. They also argue that both analytic induction and grounded theory analysis can be time- and resources consuming, as it demands a keen and developed sense of research methodology. This being the case a thematic analysis seemed favourable to deploy in this thesis study.

A thematic analysis has been carried out to build the discussion section. The deployed method of thematizing the data was carried as interlinking topics in interview data which were adequate of the stated research questions.. The data underwent a process of a two levelled thematization. The first level of thematized was applied upon the interview data at the individual interviews as they were summarized and organized into initial themes. When all of the data in five interviews had been processed the second thematization were initiated as the data in the themes were reorganized and merged into a final state.

Data points which addressed the same reoccurring aspects which were relatable to aspects of theory were highlighted and grouped together to be organized. as they were interpreted as relating to one out of the two research questions. Several themes were gathered and then again reorganized, merged or rebranded as two main themes emerged which consequently fit the two research questions.



## 4. Results

This section covers the gathered data in this thesis project divided into seven headlines covering different aspects of SC's partnerships with private sector. To ease the readers understanding of the context of some of the concepts a brief explanation is supplied below since it is a rather complex topic.

SC have created and manage a social program which exists outside of their normal operations, it is called the *PLV-program*. It is a Swedish acronym which means “*On Equal Terms*” referring to that all children have the right to grow up on equal terms. The PLV-program is a cross-sector collaboration entity which includes several other actors of society, besides the private sector. The program largely operates on an independent basis apart from the rest of SC's organisation, both at national and local levels, having its own management board and an established vision. Establishing corporate partnerships are pursued by SC both in the context of with the PLV-program as well as outside the program with the organisation. Details of this program will be elaborated more upon below.

Throughout the results the names of the companies which SC collaborates with have been censored. This was a request from some of the interviewees and therefore also applied in all of the gathered interview data. The five company partners mentioned in the interviewees have thus instead been given the fictional names: Yellow, Blue, White, Green, and Red. The interviewees names have also been shortened into to acronyms.

### 4.1 SC's Two Types of Partnerships

OM (National Director) explains that SC's company partnership approaches can roughly be divided into two different types. On one hand there are companies that are strictly financial partners which supports SC in running their operations and programs. On the other hand, there are also collaborative partnerships, which is explained by OM as including levels of integrated operations with the company's personnel. OM explain that the purpose of their financial partnerships is to acquire general funding which is not necessarily connected to the support of specific programs or operations of SC. The Key Account Manager MH describes that donors which donates more than 100 000 kronor qualifies as an official sustainability partner by SC, which is a financial partnership type. A sustainability partners are offered a communication package which contains information about SC current operational focus and latest efforts, a SC sustainability diploma, and a SC partner e-mail signature. MH explains that a company partner who wants to use SC's logo needs to contribute with at least 1 million kronor.

MH underlines that even if the concept of partnership is officially ascribed to all of their company supporters, she personally like to separate financial partnerships from collaborative partnerships as the latter involves integrated operations:

*“In these [the collaborative partnerships] we have decided upon shared goals, a shared vision, we want the same effect. It's a collaboration on the same wavelength, a dynamic approach where we both can affect the company and*

*industry as well as do things together. This allow us to create actual change”*

*(MH, Key Account Manager)*

OM explains that large commitments over long periods of time are required by companies who intend to be collaborative partnership with SC, which is something companies often initially agree upon but have trouble to understanding the magnitude of on beforehand. He underlines this as important, since without such a commitment there is a risk of bad impact on the communities targeted by the joint social program. In extension partnering with these companies (which does not understand the commitment it takes) is something which will instead hurt SC’s reputation. This is why OM mean that even if companies seek collaborative partnerships with SC, all of them are not appropriate as collaborative partners. OM describes that this can sometime become an issue as the KAMs<sup>1</sup> are driven by initiating as many potential partnerships with companies as possible. This can become a later problem when a collaborative partnership deal is handed over to a SC Organisation Developer who are responsible of identifying potential integrated operations with the collaborative partner. He explains that Organisation Developer sometimes reach a conclusion that some of these partnering companies are not suitable as collaborative partners as they do not understand the social value construct SC operates upon. Some company partners are also later found to not accept joint decision and governance structures, often in aspects of doing projects on long-term and including evaluations of the collaborative projects. These are standard procedures of SC and requirements when a company aspire to become a collaborative partner but are sometime discovered to be a problem after the KAMs have negotiated a partnership deal.

MH describes that SC have good established communication with the companies which they have partnered with for long periods, something which she attributes to the aspect of both of them having arrived at realizing that the they want to create the same effect. New partners on the other hand often need some time before they get to this point. MH reason that they are often not interested in creating the same effect as SC but instead intend to create benefits for themselves. She points out that many new potential partners which she talks to shows signs of that they haven’t come far in their CSR mind-set and are quickly identified by their way of steering the dialog:

*“They start by asking: ‘What is the price of using your logo?’, the interest is to use it in their communication, displaying that they are doing something good. This is a very basic level, they haven’t come far... .. other companies have more insight, were they look to ‘we need to work with our value chains’ or ‘how should we confront child labour issues’” (MH, Key Account Manager)*

Furthermore, MH describes that the more socially responsible companies which contacts SC almost never address the concepts of being associated with SC logo as their primary focus are to take responsibility for the communities they operate within. At the same time she also emphasizes that even

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<sup>1</sup> Key Account Manager

if SC have had a long experience of collaborating with a partner it does not mean they (the company partner) understand the fundament of a deep collaborative partnership. MH also stress that these more collaborative partnerships demands a certain readiness of submission to mutual and shared values as well as providing dedicated human resources to manage the partnerships joint operations. OM also mentions this aspect and adds that most companies are not ready for these demands, but also that commitment issues is a continuous challenge over time with partners and something which needs constant maintenance.

MD, Head of Business Development, emphasizes that SC today are more aware of how to establish collaborative partnerships, wherein SC focus on more than simple exchanges of resources. Nowadays SC wants develop partnerships upon a more open agenda led by shared vision. She describes that in her experience partnering with companies, which want to acquire socially responsible partners, not always been about collaborating in this way:

*“Traditionally, partnerships or company collaborations, have often been about one-to-one collaborations - ‘we do this you get this’, which have clear delimitations and are clear on what will be delivered”* (MD, Head of Business Development)

## **4.2 The Process of Partnering with SC**

The Key Account Manager YS explain that before partnering with a company they always examine and vet their company partners, in terms of the negative risk they might pose upon being associated with SC. This is processes is carried out with the help of external consultancy services which risk assess companies upon a standardized procedure. If a company shows an acceptable risk to partner with, the KAM continues to elaborate upon the values of partnering with SC. If a company is more interested of a collaborative partnership with SC about something specific the KAM will invite staff working with these specific social issues, as they can explain more of the work done within SC.

The Organisation Developer SP works at the regional level of SC. She explains that she cannot initiate local collaborations with companies until the KAM has negotiated a deal with that company at the national level. First when there is a partnership deal made they are handed over to the Organisation Developers, who decides upon the specific content and activities of the collaboration with the representatives of the company’s local branch of her region. The KAMs hence only negotiate the large strokes and the deal of the collaboration and not the specific content of the collaboration. The reason for this is that the knowledge of the target group and specific child’s need varies greatly depending upon the community and region. Which is a knowledge which residues with the local levels and with the Organisation Developers who operates in the local communities on a regular basis.

*“In the counties where there is a local branch, there is also an SC organisation developer responsible of the relationship. They themselves plan activities*

[independently] *depending on what the needs of that community looks like. I, on the other hand, plan this nationally.*" (MH, Key account manager)

YS explains that there are local partnerships being made with the local SC organisation around the country, this is not allowed but they still operate without a sanctioned negotiated deal from HQ. This occur as some local chapters and offices of SC are not aware of these regulations or move in grey-zones of the collaborating with companies. SP which operate at the regional level acknowledge these unsanctioned deals as well. She describes that the organisation faces a challenge to deal with this and that SC needs to better combine the competences Organisation Developers and KAMs when partnering with companies. Currently these competences are divided between the Organisational Developers and the KAMs which can be better utilized as SP believes that this structure means missed opportunities with companies at the local levels not operating on national level. YS attests of this challenge as well as he expresses that the communication between KAMs and the regional Organisation Developers can be challenging as they sometimes have had trouble agreeing on how to go about partnerships.

Besides a difference between financial and collaborative partnerships it is explained by MD that collaborative partnership operates at different levels, either at a national or at local levels. She describes that (the sanctioned company) partnerships at the local levels are mostly about carrying out the groundwork and that these local operations are dependent upon the context of the specific communities operated within. SC's collaborative partnerships at the national level focuses more upon large and strategical operations. These partnerships are more demanding compared to the collaborative partnerships of the local levels. Collaborative partnerships of the national level require, besides financial and competence contributions, the company partner to have dedicated human resources assigned to the collaboration and partnership's operation. SC business partners at the national level needs to committee to creation of larger changes and impact on society in integration with SC's staff.

### **4.3 Introducing the PLV-program**

In the interview with MD, she describes that SC have a long history of working with social values in communities struggling with socioeconomic vulnerability. SC's method to deliver social change involves social mobilization, youth empowerment action, and self-esteem increasing efforts, with the goal to mitigate socioeconomic vulnerability and strengthen youths and their parents. The departure of these activities has always carefully been defined by the specific need of the individuals of the specific community. A couple a years ago SC's leader management concluded that the work carried out within these communities was not enough since the programs did not successfully deliver broad or lasting societal changes. MD points out that this was not unique for SC, the same short-comings could be found in several other organisations active within the same communities. In this realization SC had identified that additional issues of the communities needed to mutually be addressed to successfully deliver broad and lasting social change. Social issues which they determined could not effectively be meet with their above described approach and strategies, they needed collective impact.

*“Over 70% of the parents are unemployed, about 82% of the children are living in [relative] poverty... a large portion [of children] doesn't graduate with qualifications to proceed to a higher education and there are extensive health related issues. We therefore mean that these were most undesirable results (AA, Program Director)*

AA (Program Director) argues that SC had witnessed how public social programs continuously failed to deliver lasting social effects even though accessing large amounts of resources and having over 40 years of experience within these communities. Additionally, these public programs focused on short-term solutions, using approaches which detached the communities from the operations. Furthermore, she explains that these programs were often too specific which made them limited in their contexts and not able to include the broader community's needs. AA is convinced that the social change of these programs and that of SC's own programs, failed to deliver social change since other societal issues were neglected as these communities holds a broad and extensive spectrum of social issue stretching outside of SC's child's rights focus.

MD explain that SC started to investigate the concept of an ecosystem-approach to achieve collective impact. This meant that they started searching for collaborative partners within the private sector which had shared their view and potentially their need to address social issues. They did not just want any companies as partners since they had had bad experience with the private sector before. This caused SC to develop a new and large social program which they called the PLV-program. AA explains that the main focus within the PLV-program are to address broad societal issues and to enhance SC's collaborative strategies with the aim to mobilize stakeholders of communities to achieve collective impact. The PLV-program operates parallel and separately of other SC operations as it involves a separate management board and mind-set from the rest of the organisation.

#### **4.4 Values in Partnering**

OM reasons that SC's revenues need to be spread out between many types of source in order to mitigate SC overall risk of dependency. He does not believe that funding from charitable donations and public funds are viable options for the future, but they are today the primary source of income to run SC's operations.

*“It's quite acute. Development aids are not increasing, more like the opposite...  
... we need other resources to secure our survival and venturing and objectives”  
(OM, National Director)*

One of the company partners which both function as a financial and collaborative partner is the company partner Yellow. Yellow is a collaborative partner inside the PLV-program. Yellow's financial partnership funding is built upon a specific structure, based on certain product sales. One of these structures are a percentage based upon revenues Yellow receives through their customer loyalty card

purchases. Often they add additionally to this with other donation structure within specific campaigns they launch wherein sales of specific items (like teddy bears) are donated to SC. MH is the responsible contact person and deals with the partnership concerning SC and Yellow. She describes that these additional funding in the form of donation campaigns are often further developed through conversations with her, she describes that she and Yellow's dedicated partnership manager discuss how to raise more money for specific SC projects when SC need funding. MH also describes that Yellow sometimes offer general funding open to any NGO to apply for. These funds are not dedicated to their specific partnership but Yellow often unofficially urge SC to apply for these funds on beforehand. She believes they do this because they already have an established partnership together.

In addition to this Yellow has a separate dedicated budget which covers the cost of a third engagement which deals with their employees volunteering in joint activities with SC. Yellow's branches operate in large independency and can decide to involve themselves in local collaboration projects which is when they can draw funds from this budget. MH describes that Yellow's employee volunteer programs with SC constitute out of youths being activated in sport related activities as well as job application workshop for youths. Another project organisational developer and Yellow developed together was a VR short-film about living conditions of cotton field workers to advocate better work climate for youths. Yellow's contribution in the project was that SC could use their stores as forums to showcase this film where shopping customer stopped to watch the movie. Showing this film made it possible for SC employees to meet parents and their children to inform them of SC child's right advocacy work.

#### 4.4.1 The Values Created for Company Partners

MD and AA describe that companies often contact SC as they specifically want to involve their employees in some volunteering towards their target groups of kids. In these situations, the companies have themselves developed a project-idea which they want to implement with SC's help. These projects often involve volunteer programs which intend to help kids with their education, future job careers or sports activities. MD and AA both describes that the issues with many suggested volunteer programs are that the companies often haven't thought the project suggestion thoroughly through with the best interest of the child or what specific value is created for the children. MD often argues with them if the solution they are offering is needed and on what premises this is offering value for children. She says that the departure of the social issues needs to be in focus and not the benefits for the company which wish to collaborate with them.

MD says that the intentions of these projects don't align with SC broader partnership strategy aim to establish long-term programs with potential to create societal change, which MD points out requires competent and experienced human resources and not volunteers doing temporary projects. MD explains that these companies focus is often unintentionally misplaced on what the company have to need in combination with what they believe to be what children needs. Companies in these situations

view the access to customers as the benefit gained as they specifically increase their reputation amongst SC target groups, that of socio-economical vulnerable communities. Both YS and SP explain that SC's partner Yellow are specifically very interested in the access SC has to families, as their target market are economical vulnerable families. SP elaborates that this is one aspect of why companies are interested of partnering with SC as they want to access SC's targeted communities to broaden their reach within the companies' customer segments.

SP concludes that a main challenge for her in cross-sector collaboration at the local level is to find common ground with the company partner. She reasons that the primary aspect of this is that private sector often focuses their attention towards measures based on a monetary baseline.

*“It's a challenge, how we can make it profitable for the private-sector, as the will is there, to create change” (SP, Regional Organisation Developer)*

The KAM YS describes a similar challenge as SP. He describes that as he is trying to recruit new company partners, he repeatedly needs to educate companies on what it means to be socially responsible and that they often lack the understanding of the benefits of social value. He solves these situations by make them see the economic value of being seen as socially sustainable in the public eye. He argues that being socially responsible is and will be crucial in the future for the companies when they are recruiting talent to their organisations but also increasingly important for their customers. MD views social responsibility similar to YS, explaining that their partner White gains values from their collaboration in terms of increasing their ability to recruit talent. She attests that White's collaboration with SC have created commitment amongst their company employees to the degree that they consider their joint projects as the most popular projects to work on within White's firm. She concludes that this value is what makes companies more competitive when recruiting talent.

In addition to the above discussed values of cross-sector partnering, MD also emphasizes that companies need to create a more sustainable society as it is a self-evident part of today's private sector core-strategies. MD claim that the private sectors sustainability agenda is pushed from the bottom-up as citizens of society wants more sustainable responsibility to be taken by their employers. Because of this she argues that a sustainability strategy is vital for a company's survival as it makes the company more relevant for investors and the market.

*“Today no one can make it without a sustainability strategy, by that I mean an actual sustainable strategy, not only printing Save the Children's logo next to your trademark... these are aspects which is becoming increasingly relevant for all companies... ... it's too expensive not doing it” (MD, Head of Business Development)*

MH describes that SC provide collaborative partners with feed-back reports about their social projects. She explains that collaborative partners are not always involved in the groundwork of the operations

and that these reports are needed as they lack an overview of the project they are a part of. She still emphasizes that the collaborative partners per definition are still integrated within other activities of the partnership operations. The structure and type of data within these feed-back reports depends upon the project type but also upon the requests of the partners. This being the case different partners focus upon different data:

*“Some [company partners] wants to know exactly how many participants attended our activities. Others [instead] ask ‘what effect did this give?’ (MH, Key Account Manager)*

#### **4.5 The Agenda of the PLV-program**

OM describes when they started developing PLV as new program they had three initial objectives that they wanted to address. (1) SC need to solve their urgent need of finding more sustainable financing approaches to their operations. The project-based funding they received from the government and municipalities were not viable. OM explain that these are structured as short-term funding, they want to run long-term projects of a period of least a 5-years, which was and is not possible with public funding. Serendipitously SC's two existing company partners, White and Red, expressed a will to advance their partnerships into more long-term collaborative operations and were good candidates for a new program. The dialogue between the three of them formed the first talk of what later became the PLV-program.

Besides finding long-term financing OM explains that SC wanted to address another objective, (2) to better establish SC presence within these socioeconomically vulnerable communities, long-term financing would enable that opportunity of running more long-term operations.

The PLV-program are still today trying to find its footing and to find firm ground, which their third objective relates to; (3) Investigating how to capture and discover methods of their work and how to evaluate their operations. OM stress that the traditional roles of societies sectors will in the future be readjusted through disruptive events caused by societies growing interdependency. He emphasizes that SC now need to need to reassess and reevaluate their traditional role in relation to the private and civil sector. Within this it is SC's strategy to actively contribute to the blurring of these sector-lines. OM explain that the PLV-program is positioning SC into the grey-zone outside of the what is considered the traditional sector of civil sector and private sector. Doing so also means that SC is contributing to the expansion of this grey-zone.

MD explain that the PLV-program are based upon creating shared value with their partners through an ecosystem approach of collective impact. OM also points out that subsequently the PLV-program needs to be built upon mutual identify goal structures as well as impact evaluation methods to successfully integrate their operations with their collaborative partners.



*“This is a major difference, from developing our own programs, to instead also start developing methods and tools which are larger than such efforts” (OM, National Director)*

The PLV-program enables value creation processes with resources which are much harder to obtain, according to OM, which enhances the collaboration to a higher abstract level in its support of child's rights and welfare. He explains that this allows benefits which can be shared between the partners and in extension the end-beneficiaries, the children. This also creates a mutual dependency according to OM and exemplifies that the private sector lacks assets of developing efficient access and trust with local communities which SC have access to. What SC lack is the specific competence of developing tools of evaluation, which is thus complemented through their collaborations within their partner White who are specialized in digital project management solutions. White in turn get access to SC's communities.

#### 4.5.1 Internally Re-conceptualizing the Idea of Collaborating

AA describes that as they started to setup the PLV-program they discovered that their own staff, besides the management team, had problems understanding the partnering companies' roles in collaborating and creating shared value. SC's personnel, both inside the program as well as outside it, had expected the companies' support to be what it always had been, to be held separate from their social programs and operations.

*“We saw from the beginning that assets of the local level, saw a different role for the companies. For example, they had hoped they would to a greater extent offer jobs, or possibly build new or improve facilities” (AA, Program Director)*

SP develops this further as she mentions that there also exists an issue of an anti-corporation amongst SC personnel. This are to some instances linked to the above perspective of how the company partners where to be engaged in SC's operations something which both AA and SP attest of in the interviews. They describe a general caution and scepticism towards the private sector amongst all employees in the NGO-sector and within SC including the PLV-program. They believe that this scepticism is grounded in the doubt about the real motives of companies, as many NGO employees fear that companies are not being true about their interest in collaborating. AA and SP explains that they find this doubt reasonable. AA explains that in the end the companies are run on profits even if it means their collaboration creates social values. She adds that this also have to do with that employees at SC have a strong devotion to the organisations core-values of non-profit operations acting for child's rights which are viewed as mutually exclusive with the companies' profit interests.

SP elaborates on the matter as she describes that some employees at SC are convinced that company partners will take advantage of SC's brand or access to vulnerable communities which they supply them with. Sometime companies are depicted as monster in the organisation according to SP,

who believes that it is high time to change these misconceptions. SP has an experience of working in the private sector before she was hired at SC, a job wherein she herself initiated collaborations with NGOs as employee at a company. SP knows from experience that there are company employees that have large commitment to the social agenda of SC, sometime even far outside of the scope of what is expected from them by their company employer. She argues that cross-sector collaborations are something very new and different today compared to before. She describes that there have been recent shifts within the practices of CSR, which has developed into something very different compared to what it once was. The depiction of companies as monsters comes from the old CSR practices.

OM elaborates further upon the internal confusion about the PLV-program agenda, which he attributes to internal biases of SC staff. He argues that SC as an organisation and staff sometime has a somewhat rigid view of who can call themselves an actor of child's rights. He argues that child rights actor can extend beyond traditionally viewing only NGOs as child's rights actor; actor in terms of who can speak for the child and who can support child's rights.

*“This is seen from within the disruption, which right now is developing around the sector roles. We are trying to find new ways in this, which benefits us, as well as children” (OM, National Director)*

OM explains that it can be simply put that there are duty bearers (the government) on one side, and rights' holders (the child) on the other. SC now operates in the space between these two, the grey-zone, but there are so many more actors operating in this grey-zone. Actors from the private sector have recently been adopting a more socially responsible role claiming grounds in this zone. He views this development as something positive, as companies historically have limited their child's rights work to only concern child labour and minimum work age. OM explains that companies collaborating with SC in the PLV-program want more out of partnership than they use to want. Companies want to increase their performance and profits which they aim to realize with positive effects created upon society, made possible through their partnership with NGOs like SC. This work can either be through co-operations which directly supports children or of on a strategical level which creates larger societal developments.

AA describes that the process of integrating into the mind-frame of the PLV-program is often a continuing challenge for their company partners. She says that some of the PLV-partners have a hard time comprehending and identifying their intersecting need with that of the community's need as they prioritize their own needs. She describes that:

*“... their motives have been to think: ‘How can we get closer to the target group?’ and ‘How can we be a more relevant actor for them?’” (AA, Program Director)*

#### 4.5.2 The Management of the PLV-program

OM describes their national management board which governs and guides the PLV-program's structure and operations. In the board meeting they decide upon mutual project-goals of PLV's operations later

implemented at the local levels. Collaborative partnerships can then take form depending upon the locations of SC presence and where the companies' branches operate locally. This works just like SC's collaborative partnerships outside the PLV-program, the difference is that a PLV-program projects are governed not only by SC but by the company partners who is a part of their management board as well.

OM says that nowadays the PLV-program's operations are almost exclusively funded by company partners. These companies of the board come from several different industries such as Consultancy and Digital Management, Health and Pharmacy, Banking and Insurance, Accommodations and Real Estate, and Home Furnishing. These different industries have been matched with the PLV-program's five different operational themes of: Health; Education; Work and Sustainable employment; Accommodation; and Democracy and Influence. Some of the company partners' specific industry relates more naturally to specific theme which has meant that they become more leading on that theme when designing PLV-operations. SC in this context are the actor which supplies the asset of the access to the local communities which cements the bases of all their operations. SC hence holds an essential role, argued by MD, as SC (with their NGO status) are the only actor in the PLV-program with access to local communities.

AA explains that even if the PLV-program is a collaboration with several actors, it is primarily managed by SC as they have the responsibility to establish communications of different types and build relationships with as well as between their partners. Company partner communications are also to some extent managed outside of the program as every partner has a dedicated contact person at the SC's Partnership department, a KAM who are handling the partnership negotiations.

#### 4.5.3 Collaborative Enablers

MD explains that cross-sector partnerships can be a challenge as it demands a shifting mind-set into a shared vision. She describes that SC starts all collaboration projects operated within the PLV-program by establishing a shared view of the social issue addressed. She argues that a shared view of the social issue is required as it is often very complex issues they address. This also includes agreeing to SC requirement of developing solutions in close connection to the residents of the communities addressed. This is a requirement since damaging their credibility within the communities would be devastating as SC's trustworthiness is something which have been built over a long period of time. AA describes that as time has passes their company partners often come to better understand what the PLV-program vision is all about:

*“The companies have, besides contributing with resources so that we can run operations, also repositioned themselves as companies in the comprehension of how we work and why, started to do more and larger participations in our operations.” (AA, Program Director)*

She explains that over time the different partnerships have evolved. Some of the PLV-program partners early efforts was more generic as they focused on projects of occasional meet-ups where the company supported youths in their employment search or had managers visiting the communities to run workshops with youths. AA argues that such efforts are admirable but does not hold any grand potential to solve societal issues. The PLV-partners have come to contribute with more time and commitments than before which AA emphasize has meant an enabling of better dynamics of the collaborating as none of them have specific assigned roles.

SC approach to their partners are naturally dependent upon what that specific partner are looking to get out of the collaboration, AA says, as every company partner is unique. These specific needs cover a wide range of varieties which can pose a challenge. To solve such aspects of partnering the PLV-program today offers different types of partnerships to begin with.

*“[Partner Green] wanted more temporary operations as it suited their approach of presenting their results internally. This was a frustration for some of our personnel... ..We just landed in all this, but we have had a lot of meetings and workshop to merge our ideas now” (AA, Program Director)*

She explains that SC and Green still have work to do in the context of their collaborative operations, but the above issues are less occurrent than they were in the beginning of their partnership with Green. She adds that even when they now have a better shared understanding of one another this is something which they continuously need to maintain to keep alive.

AA describes a situation wherein she as Program Director were involved in the initiation of a local collaborative project with a local branch of partner Green. In the start they had problems agreeing on the formulations of how to collaborate, so they arranged a workshop together. It ended with Green concluding that SC can independently identify the local community’s need which can be addressed. AA added that she afterwards felt that:

*“This could have easily been communicated over email instead, but we learned so much about [Green] and naturally we became closer to them. The relationship changed and our partnership improved. But it also became visible that we are in another place with them compared to [Yellow] which we have been work with for over 10 years” (AA, Program Director)*

#### 4.5.4 Bring the Organisation Closer

Current operational challenges, described by AA, have been to bridge the national and the local levels of the PLV-program. Recently workshops have been arranged with representatives of the managing board and operative personnel of SC’s local level. AA argue that these has created a closeness and tighter communication between the two levels. She mentions that this has allowed the national

representatives of the companies to refer employees to specific local personnel by name, as they meet and know where they are operating in the SC.

*“At the local level, some have felt far away from the national partnerships...  
...they haven't had continuous contact with one another or joint operations...  
but now we are at a different location where we identify that the relationships are  
a part of the collaboration, mutual learning is also a part of it” (AA, Program  
Director)*

AA describes that recently they have been working in the PLV-program with a new focus, that of capturing aspects of their relationships and learnings generated from collaborating. This new focus on interpersonal processes have meant that they have been able to unleash company partners to evolve and merge further into the PLV-program's vision. AA describes an example of such an unleashing as one of their company partners internally stopped measuring their support to SC in terms of key-indicators but instead at a level of how well they have met SC collaborative needs. She believes that this is a good way forward, but it is not all thanks to SC as all organisations of the private sectors are evolving in this direction, but she believes that their collaboration contributed to their new way of viewing social value.

*“Now we depart with a shared problem definition in which challenges are very  
complex, such as those in socioeconomical challenged communities. One needs to  
realize that we need to work together, wherein the point of departure are the  
residential needs. This is the driving force as we have shared goals, but we don't  
really know how, we don't define how. This is something which the broad  
partnership jointly decides upon from these needs.” (MD, Head of Business  
Development)*

#### 4.5.5 Departing from the Child's Need

MD describes SC operational focus is to always include the end-beneficiaries in all of their processes. In the PLV-program the end-beneficiaries are not only children but defined as the residents of the community which includes parents since PLV's operations are to target the whole ecosystem. They are also a concern as it is in the best interest of the child.

*“When working in partnerships it's a journey we do together, it is very long-term.  
We have formal board meetings every month, but I also have a dialog with the  
corporations every week. One builds a close relationship and dialog... it requires  
a close dialog continuously which can be hard to grasp. We might have an idea, a  
hypothesis, but when operations takes-off you need to revise, to see if it is  
working... it's a moving process” (MD, Head of Business Development)*

MD emphasizes that collaborating like this means that they develop the solutions together as partners. She believes that this is the work approach is needed if the collaboration wants to create societal change on a broad scale. AA exemplifies that the level of integration within the PLV-program have reached a mutually in-depth understanding of each other's organisations.

*“...[Company managers]says that they feel like they are working for SC, that's the level of integration, they say 'I feel like I'm a part of SC even if I'm employed elsewhere'. We have such a close contact that we become colleagues.” (AA, Program Director)*

This is also addressed by MH which specifically address that she works very close with the dedicated contact person of SC's partner Yellow as they mutually agree that they are close colleagues working together. YS describes the same process as he works with partner Yellow:

*“We know Yellow really well, you can almost say we are in each other's DNA, they educate us, and we exchange experiences” (YS, Key Account Manager)*

In an example AA tells of their partner Red which had their independent project outside of the PLV-program where they were developing real estate with other external society actors and companies, when they decided to halt the development project. She says that Red had identified the need of an improved social sustainable approach to the real estate development, which could according to them only be provided by assets within SC's PLV-program and demanded their involvement before developing further real estate. AA explains that this function the other way around as well as the SC recently got public funding to develop a project in an area where one of their company partners already were operational and wanted to include them in their project. She explains that the PLV-program thus also functions like a network where the involved actors recommend each other's organisation when they are confronted with potential partners in other situations.

#### **4.6 The Process of Evolve Partnerships**

SP conclude that when working with cross-sector collaboration a main issue is to find common ground, wherein actors can find value which can be created together but at the same time on their own terms. The challenge in all this is that private sector often focuses their attention towards measures based on a monetary baseline which in turn also affects the civil society organisations in cooperation with private sector. She believes that SC have realized this as they are acquiring new competence to the organisation:

*“We [organisation developers] are employed on the premises of being business developer... .. and we should function as a profit-based organisation for the consumer owners [end-beneficiaries] ...” (SP, Regional Organisation Developer)*

SP believes SC's collaborations with the private sector will keep unfolding within organisation but that it is a work in progress. This is necessary in order to adapt to the potential of the opportunities presenting themselves in on-coming collaborations. This development is fuelled by the fact that SC cannot operate as if they were interdependent of the rest of the society. SP argues that cross-sector collaboration is needed as it brings maximization of societal impact.

YS describes that he views SC's financial partnerships that he manages as an opportunity of advancing the partnership into a more collaborative partnership. He elaborates that the evolvement is sometime just something that happens as the partners need of social responsibility have increased. This can be a rather indistinct process in that sense according to him as the partner not always have a good justification of it themselves.

MH explains that their company partnerships function very differently. She compares partner Green with Yellow, where Yellow is a partner they had several collaborations with for a long time. Green is thus still a partnership which is under more fundamental development. Green is as of recently more involved in general program activities as well as the PLV-program in addition of being a financial funding partner. She considers this as one of the goals of her job, to activate partners further into several different contexts of SC's organisation.

#### **4.7 Internally Diffusing Partnership Strategies**

MD explains the PLV-program have since the beginning explicitly been designed and guided by the theoretical concepts of collective impact and formation of an ecosystem of collaborations. A smaller group of SC personnel are currently involved in the work of developing these strategies to diffuse them into the rest of the organisation. This is mainly carried out by the PLV-program Director and the National Director of SC Sweden. This is furthermore a work approach which MD emphasis as something which will in the future concern the whole organisation. She describes these new conceptual approaches as something very challenging to diffuse.

OM explains that they are currently working on enhancing their collaboration strategies further to encompass more integrated collaborations with their partners. SC are now trying to overview how they can better coordinate and bring enhanced effects to their program operations. He believes that SC as an organisation need more integrated collaborations with partners as an approach to bring enhanced effect.

*“We have increasingly more collaborations which concerns shared values, where we work within the program with a specific company for a specific reason. We are currently trying to take this even further... .. we are going to shared values, simply put, to collective impact or mapping of ecosystems, where the company's core operations can have a meaning for child's rights”(OM, National Director)*

MD reasons that formal governance structures within these partnerships of drafting contracts and establishing operation principals are all good approaches but in the end it all comes down to the concept of what she calls a shifting mind-set which truly indicates the commitment to collaborative operations. She emphasizes that this shift concerns SC just as much as the private sector, as both sides need to experiment how to approach shared value as they need one another:

*“In the work of cross-sector partnering it is necessary, [that] one talks of a shifting mind-set, which is required by all including ourselves, when working on shared goals across sectors as we have different entry points” (MD, Head of Business Development)*

OM explain that they lately also have reviewed their revenue and operating models in SC with the intent to blur the lines between different sectors:

*“The different roles of sectors have always been clearly crystalized. There is a change in this now, in society, within this we are trying to find a better way of operating, making this a part of our business. With business we mean both revenues but also the effect on children” (OM, National Director)*

The same is argued by SP, that SC now need to enhance existing collaborative partnerships. She believes that these collaborations should aim to appropriating more value and accomplish even larger impact on society, compared to what they historically been doing within value creation in collaborations with private sector. SP points out that the history of SC organisational identity as an organisation have shifted before, as they once were a charity organisation. Now they operate upon an advocacy vision and run social programs to create change and SC do not operate on handing out support to their target groups anymore. She claims these shifts to fundamentally rests within the general development of society. This is also why SC needs to adapt again into claiming an identity which more efficiently deliver impact upon society in favour of children. She is sure of that impacting society through collaborations, with other NGOs and corporates provides a better ground of social change.

*“We need to be more actors, we in the NGO-world can’t act in isolation, we need to work together” (SP, Regional Organisation Developer)*



## 5. Discussion and Analysis

This analysis starts by classifying how SC views their partnerships with the private sector and how these fit into the theory of the literature review. It starts with identifying SC's collaborative values and how these are sourced within the partnerships in accordance to Austin & Seitanidi (2012a). The collaborative value type of interaction is viewed as central throughout this discussion. Through this process the value proposition of SC's partnerships better understood and then illustrated in figures.

Secondly this analysis focus upon how SC's frames values in their partnerships as well as how describing how they have issues dealing with company partners which does not understand the concept of shared value creation.

### 5.1 Conceptualizing SC's Partnership Values

This sub-section aims to classify SC's partnerships through identifying how they relate to the four partnerships types described by Austin & Seitanidi (2012a). This is carried out through identifying the different value types and value sources in SC's partnerships, which in turn relates to the four different partnerships of the CVC framework (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). This is analytically interesting as it offers clarity to managers and SC management upon the value proposition offered to companies within their current and future partnerships with SC. Important to note out is that the four partnerships types constitute out of different value propositions which thus offer different strategical value and suitability with different corporations. All corporations might not hold a good organisational fit for co-creative partnerships and are better used as financial partners, and vice versa. Hence, an increased insight of how to classify the collaboration values and how they are or can be sourced throughout SC's different partnerships. Carrying out such a process might increase the understanding of how partnership can be utilized more efficiently and effectively to create value. More importantly, it allows SC to understand how partnerships can be further developed into achieving broader social impact for their target group of socio-economical vulnerable children and their families.

OM and MH have to some extent already classified SC's partnerships into two different types, that of financial partnerships or collaborative partnerships. These interviewees descriptions entail a form of structure of SC's partnership types organized upon two aspects; (1) the involvement of monetary transfers to SC which they can use freely and (2) upon their partner's operative integration within SC's social projects. SC's financial partnership is defined by fulfilling the first aspect and rejecting the second aspect. SC's collaborative partnership is defined by fulfilling the second aspect and rejecting the first aspect. This analysis section is therefore divided into first addressing SC's financial partnership and secondly their collaborative partnerships.

The reader needs to note before moving further into the analysis, that the term of "*collaborative partnerships*" within SC refers to the above-mentioned division between their two types of partnerships. The word of "*collaborative*" or "*collaboration*" used by Austin & Seitanidi (2012a;2012b) are instead used as a synonym of partnering or partnership, as they view all partnerships as collaborative at some

level. In this theory philanthropic and transactional partnerships are thus included as collaborative, even if the integrative and transformational partnership holds higher levels of collaboration because of their integrative partnering strategy.

### 5.1.1 SC's Financial Partnerships

The theoretical philanthropic and transactional partnerships (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a) shares three similar elements with that of SC's financial partnerships. Firstly, SC's financial partnerships overall purpose is described as the acquiring of funding, which are generic and depreciable resources. The funding acquired through their financial partnerships is free to channel into any of SC's operations and programs. Philanthropic and transactional partnerships are foremost defined, like that of SC financial partnership, to obtain more generic resource such as money transfers. Secondly, SC's financial partnerships and the two conceptual partnership types shares the same departure, that of keeping the organisations' value creation and operations separate from their company partner. Thirdly, this also means that there is no need to assess one another's value frames as operations are never integrated, since the partner's operations are kept separate (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b). This also suggest that the integrated partnership type does not occur in SC's financial partnerships. From this we can conclude that SC's financial partnerships fits well within the theory of philanthropic and transactional partnership as these also operates upon partnership of diverged value frames and more generic and depreciable resources.

There is additional depth within these partnerships which can first be discovered as we identify the value types and value sources that occurs within SC's financial partnership. This analysis thus aims to emerge deeper into the context SC's partnerships strategical value an underlying purpose, as these has not emerged by themselves within the interview data. There a clear focus upon offering associational value in SC's financial partnerships which is exchanged for funds being transferred to the organisations. The company fund transfers have a clear unilateral directionality coming from the company partner, which adhere to a philanthropic nature. These philanthropic partnerships are to some degree transactional in its characteristics, which is given in an example described by MH. She describes that a company whom contributes with more than 100 000 kronor are titled a sustainability partner. The sustainability partners are offered SC's communication package, but even if these partners are offered something back it cannot really be considered a transactional partnership. This must be viewed as unilateral exchanges as the resource transfer of money clearly does not correspond the value of the communication package offered in return. Clearly the company partner is gaining value elsewhere, associational value (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a).

This example is well complimented by the statements of YS and MD who explain that the associational value gained by their companies is vital for them in terms of increased reputation and credibility in activities such as hiring personnel and increase its relevance with the market and investors, through the eyes of society. SC's company partners were not interviewed so we cannot know this to be

true for sure, but it is true from the perspective of that SC view these as values within their partnership value proposition. Aside from this, we know from theory that these associational values are often linked to reputational justified CSR, (Porter & Kramer, 2006; 2011) a value which is later refined into CSR reports. From theory we know that these figures seldom contain which NGO the company been donating money to as the focus is upon the action of doing it not what these donations generated in terms of social progress. Thus, we can conclude that SC's financial partners which donates less than 100 000 kr gained generic and depreciable collaborative values. The generic values sourced from this modest complementarity primarily residues with the company partners accessing more socially responsible needed for their public image and SC accessing well-needed funding to their organisation. The sustainability partnerships offered by SC holds less generic value return as the corporations are given a communication package which holds some organisational specific information. That is to say they are more specifically supporting SC rather than an NGO out of many, which is the case with partners who donates less than 100 000 kr. The sustainability partnership most still be considered philanthropic collaboration. Subsequently, since SC's financial and sustainability partnership concerns generic values there are no significant linked interests within these partnerships. This concludes that SC's financial and sustainability partnership is mainly a philanthropic partnership by its characteristics. We need to at the same time understand that many of SC's company partners (like their partner Yellow) holds several types of partnerships simultaneously. These are here viewed as separate partnerships as they are managed by different people with respective organisation.

MH explain that company partners who contributing with more than 1 million kronor are allowed to use SC's logo. MD explained that it is not uncommon for companies to specifically investigate the access to the SC's logo before the partnerships have been elaborated upon. This data indicates again that many companies are interested in reputational justified CSR (Porter & Kramer, 2006). The created associational value of a logo licensing becomes less generic compared to the values gained in the sustainability partner as the company's contribution is no longer a number in a CSR report about supporting civil sector but linked to SC's organisation specific associational value embedded within their logo. This concludes that partners which are interested in logo licensing differs from sustainability partners. These can hence be viewed as more transactional partnership of the financial partnerships.

One might view the distinction between philanthropic and transactional partnership as – one partner *giving resources* respectively partners *exchanging resources*. It is not always that simple which is revealed in the above example of SC's sustainability partnerships and logo licensing. Moreover, a better way of identifying the difference between a philanthropic and transactional partnership is to instead look to the levels of interaction occurring. Transactional partnerships demand some levels of interaction while philanthropic partnerships do not necessarily have to include any interaction at all. We have seen, so far that the interview data conclude that SC's financial partnerships value proposition is very much limited to the associational value being gained by of being connected to a child's rights

organisation or SC specifically as an organisation. This means that a large part of SC partnership strategy is linked to their publicly communicated values and operations in communities of interest to companies. The specific value communicated by SC are their achievements of social impact through their social programs and advocacy work. This can be viewed as a one-sided interaction value creation in the from SC to society, including the private sector, as actors do know SC before they donate or fund their work. In turn this means a limited amount of interaction values to build with these partners.

In extension it can be interpreted that interaction values can be created through organisation specific associational values produced by SC, meaning corporations which never been partnering with SC still have recognition of their assets and operations. Depending upon how publicly well-known the company partner is, this works vice versa that is to say SC’s search for partners with good organisational fit are proceeded by their reputation of good CSR practices. This means that some accumulation of interaction values can be considered to exist through associational value built elsewhere, even before the partnerships has been initiated. Therefore, transactional partnerships of logo licensing can hold very beneficial values beyond what is directly created within the specific partnership as these proceeds into potential partnerships in the future. Philanthropic and transactional partnerships are therefore important as they are the seeds of future integrative partnerships. This is something YS denote as an approach he uses when evaluating potential partners.

Below is a figure which is sourced from Austin & Seitanidi (2012a). The figure includes the different sources of value and types of values, which are listed below these headlines. They are then assessed upon a scale to better illustrate the different levels. In the top of the figure SC’s financial partnerships is assessed to “sole-creation” and largely being philanthropic or transactional.

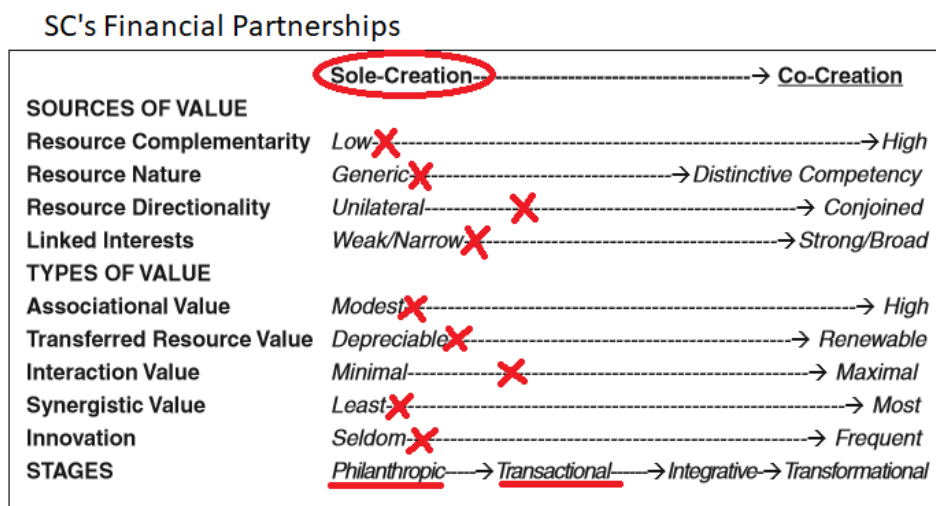


Figure 8- SC's Financial Partnerships Evaluated

### 5.1.2 SC's Collaborative Partnerships

The analysis of SC's collaborative partnerships is not as straightforward as that of their financial partnerships. If SC's financial partnerships closely relates philanthropic and transactional partnering one might assume that SC's collaborative partnerships falls within the other two categories of partnerships, the integrated and transformational partnership types. Recall that integrative partnerships are founded upon two elements, that of an extensive accumulation of interaction values and co-operations which involve some levels of integration and use of organisational specific assets.

The interview data points towards that SC have several collaborative partnerships which holds high interaction value creation. The level of integration, on the other hand, seems to vary greatly within these collaborative partnerships. The interviewees descriptions of these partnerships integrated operations are at times limited to co-creation which occurs separately in the fashion described by Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) as mutually reinforced. We can find this in the interview data from MH as she explains that their collaborative partners are not always integrated into the SC's groundwork which is why they get feed-back reports of the work carried out. In other words, SC's collaborative partners are only integrated at the level of the management and not in the actual operations. This indicates that collaborative company partnerships at times only support with resources of planning and advising on social projects. Which seemingly entails that collaborative company partners in fact are bilaterally transferring their organisational competence simply in exchange for the associational value of being in a partnership with SC. Which more resemblance a transactional partnership than an integrated partnership. The gathered interview data is not specific enough to analysis this context further but shows an interesting theoretical gap of the literature review, it entails a confusion of what the company partners involvement of social value creation truly is all about. Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) described element of mutually enforced activities points out that a company partner should not specially carry out groundwork with communities as this is seldom within their competence. Their theory never specifically refers to the any integrative partnership types, as described by Austin & Seitanidi (2012a), but instead address the co-creation of shared values which in theory could be carried out through a transactional partnership. The question remains what integrated partnerships operations refers to in such a setting, as the overlap between highly developed transactional partnerships can come across as integrative partnerships. The transformational partnership type clearly demands both partners to be well inserted in the social issues and community mind-set which can hardly be achieved without meeting the community and end beneficiaries, which means that the company partners needs to be a part of this process.

Moreover, SC's partnership with Yellow are seemingly illustrative of how the interviewees at SC defines their collaborative partnerships, as this partnership is mentioned as well-developed in connection to their long commitment to on another. We need to note that it is not possible to analyse SC's partnership with Yellow as if there is only one type of partnership. There are actually several bonds and levels, it seems, which represents different types of partnerships. This seems to depend upon

the personnel connected to the joint project as they are run in isolation from each other. The interviews show that SC do as well do define it this way, that they have both a financial and collaborative partnership projects together. With this distinction it seems that the main focus falls upon transferred resource values as details are scrutinized. This conclusion supports their connection of being both a transactional and integrated partnership type, which depend upon the specific project. The examples given by interviewees of their co-operations at local levels, that of showcasing a VR short-film and running corporate volunteer programs, are transactional collaborations which have a specific resource complementarity to it. It seems that SC themselves in the case of Yellow defines these operations as collaborative partnering on the basis that they do not involve traditional money transactions and thus are not a financial partnership in their distinction. Remember the first distinction from above, that when money transfers are not involved it is not considered a financial collaboration. This in itself is not a criterion of being a collaboration in accordance to theory. From this aspect SC's collaborative partnership operations with Yellow are more transactional but they are using organisational specific resources which includes some level of integration. Again, the gathered data never entails the level of integrated managing within these operations and projects. This makes it hard to realize how to define their partnerships, but these examples are clearly not a philanthropy.

The interview data indicates high accumulation of interaction values within SC's partnership with Yellow. Interestingly is that the data indicates that their financial partnership includes high levels of interaction of how Yellow can donate more money to SC, which clearly is a philanthropic partnership project. MH describes this interaction value accumulation with her specific contact person with Yellow as they adjust the donation structure temporarily, but the interview data is limited to their relationship and is seemingly never used to develop further beyond a philanthropic agreement. Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) suggest that interaction value creation in philanthropic partnerships are limited which does not seem to be the case with Yellow's partnership with SC. They maintain a regular communication with one another through dedicated contact persons of the partnership. MH, who are responsible of their financial partnership, explain that she and Yellow's contact person consider themselves as close colleagues. YS goes as far as to describes Yellow as inside SC's organisational DNA. This can be analysed within two aspects, that of partnerships not being static, and that interactions values might have a spill-over effect when there are parallel partnerships with the same partner.

Recall that Austin & Seitanidi (2012a;2012b) describes that partnership types can be placed along a continuum with philanthropic partnerships on end and transformational on the other end. Hence partnership types cannot be considered static but often inherently dynamic as interactions between partners makes the partnerships to involve different levels of co-operation at different periods of time. Yellow is described as one of the oldest company partners of SC as they have partnered for several decades which can explain the complex nature of their partnering being partial philanthropic and at the same time utilized values which spill-over from their transactional and an integrated partnering, which



agenda are to develop more integrated operation with company partners, something which interviewees directly relate to the creation of shared values, collective impact and establishing an ecosystem approach, concepts which are described by Porter & Kramer (2011) and Kramer & Pfitzer (2016). The interviewees describing this are MD, OM and AA, which are all a part of the top management of developing SC's partnership strategies and the PLV-program management board. The asset of this conceptual knowledge seems to have had a considerable effect upon SC strategical development of the PLV-program to incorporate integrated partnering. Even so, it seems still be under much development.

These three SC interviewees are obviously up-to-date on the academical discourse of cross-sector partnership theory. The interview data from these managers thus shows that they are aware of the elements on how to achieve collective impact in partnering presented in Kramer & Pfitzer (2016). The interviewees OM and MD seemingly touch upon these five elements, whereas a shared understanding and vision in the program is repeatedly emphasized, which relates to establishing a *common agenda* (element number 1). OM explain that the PLV-program's current main objective is to establish a *shared measure system* (element number 2). Company partners are recruited upon how well they fit the with the PLV-program's agenda which shows that they act on *mutually reinforcing activities* (element number 3). They have regular board meetings which establishes *constant communication* (element number 4). Lastly, it is explained by AA that SC have the lead on managing the relationships between the partners and recruiting additional actors to the PLV-program, which relates to that of a *dedicated "backbone" support* (element number 5). This concludes all five elements of Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) are being actively addressed in the PLV-program.

Besides addressing these five elements of Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) the PLV-program includes additional objectives in their agenda to secure integrated operations with their partners: (1) Assigning dedicated personnel to the operations of the program; (2) Partner participation in management board of the PLV-program; (3) Being engaged with extensive commitment; (4) Commit to long-term engagement; and (5) Committing to evaluation of their joint projects. This set agenda relates to that of Van Tulder, et al. (2015) which emphasize that the shared understanding between partners needs to be integrated in the partnership. The issue of partners having trouble understanding the social issues addressed also connects to Van Tulder, et al. (2015) which claim this as the fundamental aspect of effectively achieving social impact. The interview data shows that this something which SC actively are trying to convey to their partners but which they have trouble communicating which connects to that SC are fairly new to an integrated partnership strategy as the PLV-program is still developing.

The PLV-program aims to support the formation of collaborative partnerships which MD defines as collaborations which are more than transactions and founded upon a shared vision. She adds that an open agenda steers the partnerships into develop as they go along. This aligns with Austin & Seitani (2012a) describes integrated partnering as a shared vision and open agenda fosters interaction value creation which uncovers linked interest beyond the initial setting.



In theory SC's partnerships within the PLV-program seem to be the definition of how to achieve shared value creation, but the interview data is rather limited upon how the well-integrated their partnerships are besides having management board. OM explicitly defines that SC through the PLV-program wants to access resource which traditionally are hard to access through a partnership, focus thus seems to be upon resource acquiring and not operative integration. An example of such are White's competence to develop a measuring and evaluation tool for SC social programs. On one hand this supports the conclusion that partnerships within the PLV-program can be viewed as integrative as they are utilizing co-creative and integrated operations with their partners. On the other hand, the integration of the partnership is limited to managing and delegate the activities in the same way Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) describes as mutually reinforced. The operations and development are later carried out separately and not in integrated teams which we can tell from the partnerships with White as they develop a measuring tool which SC can later use in their social program. Reading from Austin & Seitanidi (2012a;2012b) it is not clear on how this is to be interpret this. What is said about highly developed integrative and transformational partnerships are that partner's familiarity have more or less become institutionalized. I interpret this as meaning that they have integrated operates where they act as one throughout the value creation process, which must mean mutually carried out groundwork besides managing projects.

AA describes an interesting example which can be described as a transformational partnering characteristic. I am referring to the real estate developing project example where Red decided to halt their involvement because they considered the residents' needs of that community as not being rightly meet. Red only wanted to continue the project if SC was involved in investigating this community's need. Red entails both an ability to realize the need of community and an ability to identify that SC's specific assets are need within this process. Red seemingly understands the importance of the social value creation which effects their economic value creation without marginalizing the communities need. In other words, Red understand that they have a linked interest with SC and that the complementarity of their assets to create shared value in this specific real estate project. This can be described as going beyond trying to produce associational values and having realized the shared value proposition of creating social progress.

#### 5.1.4 Conceptualizing Collaboration Values

The idea suggested by Austin & Seitanidi (2012a;2012b) and elaborated upon in this analysis is that the knowledge of collaborative value creation can be made into a capability which supports partnership development and strategies. SC seems to lack the conceptual language and the knowledge of collaborative values and how to model these. That is the value types and its sourced context which could clarify their partnership's value proposition. Especially how to utilize interaction value accumulation as an active strategy to advance partnerships development.

SC view upon interaction values can better be realized through analysing how the interviewees refer to time as the factor which has brought closeness within partnerships. The interviewees seem unaware of that it is instead possible to identify that it is the interaction over time which has allowed them to become close. The vitalness of interaction values as a fundamental aspect of partnership is continuously an unnoticed aspect within the interviews with the SC managers. At the same time MH do address that sometimes the length of the partnership does not reflect the closeness between SC and their partners, but she never goes as far as to express that there it is the value in their interactions which makes the difference. An additional example of this issue is that AA explain that her extra meeting with their partner Green felt unnecessary, even if she explain that she in the end did learn from it. The notion of having frequent interactions beyond top management when running integrated operations with partners seems unrecognized by the interviewees.

Another example of how communication as part a challenge to SC is that they have an issue with the internal accumulation of interaction value of how they deal with partnerships. This is partially caused by the PLV-program being separated from the rest of the organisation. The PLV-program strategy agenda is perceived by SC's personnel as something different than what management is communicated, it is an issue as they do not agree with or understand the agenda and the fundamental concept of shared value or collective impact. Concepts used literally by top management but are not diffused within SC's organisation. The same issue of lack of interaction is to be found again in the different levels of the PLV-program as the national level and local level operates upon different perceptions of how to engage with partners. The internal communication of the vision of how the PLV-program have not properly been communicated. More surprisingly the issue is reoccurring in the PLV-program with the company partners as they are repeatedly described as not understanding the social value context the PLV-program intend to pursue, implicating that SC's partnership value proposition needs to be better communicated. We can find such examples in the interview data of MD and AA. They explain that the issue with volunteer programs is that the offered labour is often not of interest for SC since these volunteers does not bring any specific competence, the transaction does not involve enough value for SC which can sustain social progress, mostly they are considered inappropriate. This is on one hand somewhat confusing as SC do have volunteer programs with their partner Yellow which does not offer any specific competence more than labour. On the other hand, these volunteer programs are partnerships which operate at local levels of SC's organisation. This issue is acknowledged by YS who says that the local levels of SC sometimes operate without the consent of HQ, which might be the case of this specific situation. This reveals a discrepancy between the national and local level in form of how collaborative value is viewed and what is considered a fair partnership deal. It should be added that MD operates at the higher level within SC and are mostly involved within the PLV-program's partnerships strategies, which thus is disconnected from these types of SC's partnerships. To summarize, there is a clear operative difference of assessing the collaborative value of partnerships at the national level and local level.

On one hand it is clear that the top-management of SC have good knowledge of the elements to create collective impact through an ecosystem as they are familiar with this from theory. On the other hand, what they lack is the knowledge of abstract collaborative values, which are the fundament which builds the partnerships from the ground. These aspects are as described in the background section as an element which are missing within theory of Porter & Kramer (2006;2011) and that of Kramer & Pfitzer (2016), compared to Austin & Seitanidi (2012a;2012b) and Van Tulder, et al.(2015). This hence correlates with the same issues occurring within SC integrated partnerships. More importantly the lack of insight about what abstract collaborative value are and how they are sourced occurs both in the setting of how SC's management view company partners, but also how partners view partnership with SC. The value proposition of SC's partnerships can be clarified through a better analysis of their abstract collaborative values.

## **5.2 The Process of Framing Value**

SC's and their PLV-program partners' comprehension of different value frames is crucial in their integrated operations as this increases the effectivity of delivering social impact upon their social mission, that of child's rights (Van Tulder, et al.,2015). The interview data indicates that there is an issue within this shared understanding which is important as the PLV-program partnerships aim is to secure collective impact (Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016). To do so SC's and its company partners needs to support the collaboration through by enabling a converged frame of the partnership's values and common agenda. This means that the value frame of the integrated partnership needs to be jointly defined by partners and forged out of both organisations' definitions and agendas of how social and economic value are created, that is to say how to produce shared values (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b; Porter & Kramer; 2011).

### **5.2.1 Myopic Value Framing**

The gathered data of SC's partnering strategies shows no signs of a process wherein they are focusing upon the framing of what social values are as an abstract concept, how shared values can be defined as economic value refined into social values and societal progress. The PLV-program are emphasizing the importance of establishing a common agenda, which aligns with that of Kramer & Pfitzer (2016). This common agenda is meant to enable and foster shared understanding of the objectives, but within this theory the issue of divergent value framing never surface. SC's issues with company partners not understanding the social value context is reflected by Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) theory gap of the process of reframing value in cross-sector collaborations. This point is linked to Austin & Seitanidi (2012b) criticism of Kramer & Porter (2011), that they never elaborate upon the process of how to operationalize shared value, something which their concept of linked interest does a better job of doing in the context of the Collaborative Value Creation framework.

We can review data examples of issues being addressed as we recall that SP describes that her main problem, as she develops new collaborative partnerships, is to find common ground. Therefore,

she reasons that SC as an organisation needs to be better at understanding how partnerships can become profitable for companies, SP put emphasis upon SC to better understand how to make profit, just as the private sector. The data from the interview with SP also implicitly defining a linked interest as SP describes that their partner Yellow need to reach a specific customer and gain market shares, which can be meet through the access of SC's target groups and communities.

Again, YS and MD explain that SC's company partners' main value gain is the associational value which can support them in recruitment of talent and increasing employee morale. MD furthermore explain that companies need to act responsible since it is demanded by society. Justifying CSR upon reputational and society's ethical demands is something which we can recall being discussed in Porter & Kramer (2006) as responsive CSR. AA relates to the above discussion as she argues that partnering with companies will always be on the company's terms as they want to make economic profit. In line with the above MH describes that some companies prospecting to become SC partners have their focus upon their own benefits of partnering which shows a responsive CSR practice (Kramer & Porter, 2006). All this data relates to that SC's main issue with their partners is to finding common ground. This is again reflected by YS who explains that he has to educate partners of what social values are. Moreover, this type of responsive CSR approach from companies becomes furthermore an issue for SC as it might reinforce the fear and anti-corporation bias personnel of SC have, as they are struggling to collaborate with these partners. This creates negative spill-over as the corporations which are acting upon strategical CSR and prospecting as partners with SC face the issue of SC's personnel not being willing to compromise with SC traditional core values, fighting against this new partner strategy made by the top management. These core values seem to be linked to the will of maintaining SC's independent social value creation and which implicit limits SC's company partnerships to philanthropic and transactional partnering.

In summery this suggest that SC's managers lack an effective approach of framing social value as an economic benefit when they communicate the benefits of initiating a partnership with them both the private sector and their own personnel. In other words, top management are not effectively communicating what shared value is as they do not seem to know how to operationalize it. This issue is revealed as the interviewees describes SC' partnership values proposition, almost exclusively referring to the associational value and networking which allows access to communities gained through partnering with SC. Porter & Kramer (2006) points out that responsive CSR focus upon the tension between business and society, this is what hinders shared value to emerge. MD claim that companies needs to be perceived as socially responsible to be competitive, she underlines that it is too expensive to not have a CSR strategy. This perspective departure from the tension and not the opportunity within co-creating values through cross-sector collaborations. In other words, SC's current value proposition of partnering is seemingly communicated through the frame of how to make profit, which frames economic value and in the process makes the social value creation marginalised. This is also the reason

why SC has issues with companies not understand the social value context as SC initiate their the PLV-program's integrated partnerships upon economic value and not shared value creation.

### 5.2.2 Value Frame Fusion

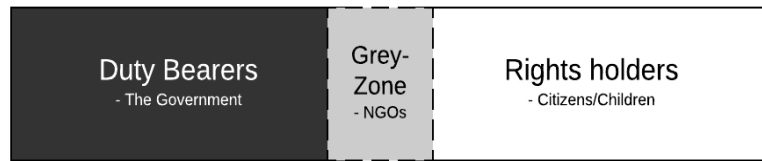
AA mentions that the PLV-program now have started to focus upon efforts of understand learnings and relationships with their partners and the personnel of the program. This entails that SC at some level have started to implicitly realize the importance of interaction value creation. Within these efforts SC wants to enable a better connection between the national level and the local levels of their co-operations. This provides a setting in which framing of values like linked interests can arise and thus also identifying how to better frame social value and its creation. This seems needed as they currently have the issue of partners not understanding the social value context which relates to the process of how to frame value. This issue descends not only from lack of interaction but also from the fact that SC and their partners from the start frames value differently.

MD explain that the PLV-program utilizes a "*shifting mind-set*" as they initiate collaborative partnerships to enable shared understanding. This concept resemblance that of value frame fusion but with exceptions. The process of shifting mind-sets is explained as resulting the company partners and SC personnel to reposition themselves in their understanding of the PLV-program agenda and its objectives. In other words, this process entails that SC and their partner need to set aside previous practices of partnering and their differences. It never specifically seems to address that both parties have an inherent different view upon how to frame value in partnership which stems from culture as well as different sectors. This thought process of a shifting mind-set seems to have potential but evidently the issues of communicating the social value aspect externally and internally of shared value remains within SC as they have not yet been able to overcome this.

OM is the only interviewee who makes the connection of the social value frame in the concept of shared value. I conclude this as he explains that company partners which supports communities will indirectly gain better profits and increased performance. Shared value creation complemented by the CVC framework, identifies and utilize economic value which is refined into social values which impacts society. It should be understood in sequence wherein social value creation comes first and indirectly turns social progress which supports economic value in the market (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Van Tulder, et al., 2015). Most of the SC interviewees instead frame the value shared value in terms of the economic values, which automatically frames social value as something created in the periphery of the process when it should be the other way around. They are too occupied with the private sector's value frame which makes them miss out on defining the partnerships social value creation which subsequently creates economic value outputs in a later stage.

Moreover, OM explain an interesting process of how to view child rights actors with a grey-zone between duty bearers and rights holders (Illustrated in figure 10). This concept resemble the results of the value frame fusion process. The difference is though that companies outside of the context of a partnerships with civil sector try to acquire and

A Traditional View of Rights Actors



An Expanded View of Rights Actors

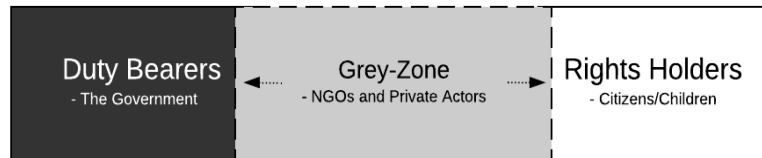


Figure 10 - The Grey-zone of Rights actors. Source: Author

merge their economic value frame with a new social value frame. This mean that they adopt a new form of organisational identity. This new organisation identity of private actors as child rights actor exemplifies what cross-sector collaborations can accomplish through a value frame fusion process. OM also mean that this is the process of what SC is doing but from the other way around, as they are merging their social value frame with that of an economic value frame idea. Note that in the setting explained by OM this is not done in the context of a partnerships but as a process where NGOs and companies starts to operate more upon the independent agenda of social value

What seems to be dominating SC's top management of partnerships strategizing are the concepts found in Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) and Porter & Kramer (2011). These concepts are insightful, but they do not offer the conceptual knowledge needed to operationalize shared value creation which cause a bottleneck of achieving social impact. The conceptual knowledge offered by Austin & Seitanidi (2012a;2012b) as well as Van Tulder, et al. (2015) on the other hand is more fundamental as it helps organisations to understand the underlying mechanics of values in cross-sector collaborations. This is especially true as one looks to how linked interest as a value type better describes the value creation of shared benefits for partners, compared to Kramer & Pfitzer (2016) elaboration of shared value which is framed by the economic value perspective.

## 6. Conclusions

The above discussion pivots around two main themes, that of conceptual knowledge of collaborative value creation and its enabling effects of establishing and managing cross-sector collaborations. This knowledge brings two parallel perspectives, how to define collaborative value types and their source, and upon the process of how to reframe value as partners in cross-sector collaboration. The main theme relates to the first research question and the direction of the thesis relates to the underlying research questions, which we can recall as:

- *How does Save the Children Sweden manage their cross-sector partnerships with actors of the private sector?*
- *How are Save the Children Sweden managing challenges within value creation within cross-sector partnerships with actors of the private sector?*

To address the first research question, the framework developed by Austin & Seitanidi (2012a) offers an immense load of insight on how to better operationalize the fundamental parts of partnering. I suggest that SC look over how they define their value propositions after acquiring the above knowledge. Doing so on a regular basis as partnerships are initiated will mean that this knowledge can be refined into a capability which will serve SC's purpose of achieving increase social impact through their programs. It also needs to be acknowledged that SC has obviously come far in developing their partnerships strategies as they are using the concept of shared value from Porter & Kramer (2011) and in their efforts of establishing the PLV-program aiming to mobilize the ecosystem around their communities (Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016).

The second research question is thus answered with that SC are in fact struggling with this challenge. It seems that they have lost themselves within the economic value frame as they want to justify why companies should partner with them. The value frame fusion process elaborated upon by Austin & Seitanidi (2012b) would enable them a better insight of their own social value frame and support companies to better understand social value as keep their social value creation separate from their partners. At the same time OM Mattson are describing that SC already actively are move towards the scenario of SC as more than an NGO. This implies that SC also actively are interested in understanding and adopting an economic value frame within their organisational focus. MD's elaboration of addressing the shifting mind-set is also very interesting but it does not mean that the concept of value frame fusion can be better operationalize the social value frame than their current focus on how they convey the social value proposition of their partnerships.

### 6.1 Implications and Recommendations to Managers

If SC's partnerships strategy goal is to establish and enhancing integrated partnerships, within the PLV-program as well as in the rest of the organisation, they will want to establish better communication about the common agenda. They will want to enable better shared understanding of their partners. These

are issue which can be solved through better understanding the collaborative value types and their sources. They will also want to enhance their integration through that of a value frame fusion process as they initiate partnerships. SC need to better clarify their value proposition in their cross-sector partnerships, right now these are very incoherently processed. They need to start pitching their value proposition with a departure from the social values which can be created when creating shared value in partnering with SC, not from the economic benefits created later through responsive CSR practices (Porter & Kramer, 2011; Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016; Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b).

In these processes the major issue ahead will not be face challenges with company partners but within the organisation as they will in extension will deal with manage the co-creation. The internal challenge comes in the form of SC personnel as they hold anti-corporate attitudes which also seems to be bound to the personnel's strong devotion to SC's traditional core values.

Understanding a shifting mind-set might not be enough, as it seems that SC's are diluting their own social agenda as in the process of approaching the private sectors way of framing value to become a better partner. Value frame fusion, which focus upon a merger of two different value frames instead leaning towards one or the other thus instead offers a better solution of how to find a common agenda and shared understanding in partnerships wherein both sides can keep their distinct organisational identities and still operate integrated (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012b; Van Tulder, et al, 2015). Hence, the following is my recommendation to SC's manager to further look into:

*1) Restructure their Partnership's Value proposition* - SC could enhance and better diffuse their knowledge of how to actively model their value proposition of a cross-sector collaboration. All partnerships do not have to be integrated as these evolve over time if there is a good organisational fit. An implicit value proposition would help better identifying the potential between company partners as they are separated into their different partnership offers.

*2) Conceptual Knowledge of Collaborative Values* - The process of modelling a value proposition can be hard as all partners will be different. The collaborative value types and sources solves this issue as they help identifying what type of partnerships which is suitable. How a shared value creation process is initiated does not seem to be a concept which any interviewees grasp, even if they do mention how it is carried non really explain how it starts.

*3) The Importance of Accumulating Interaction Values* – I agree with the research, which is also address by some of the interviewees, that the interdependency is growing phenomena which needs to be dealt with by SC's mangers strategically, just as they have been doing by forming the PLV-program. Company partnerships will be the future and the larger income source to cover other losses. The importance of interaction values can therefore not be underestimated. The interaction values precedence all other value creation, and especially the synergetic values. More importantly it allows new value



sources to be realized such as linked interest. This means starting to communicate a whole new strategy of co-creation throughout the organisation. This includes looking into how they can enhance interaction value accumulation and better diffuse these throughout the organisations. Most of the interviewees seems just as stuck as the private sector who been focusing upon how they are perceived and upon the tension between business and society when explaining the way forward. SC's managers need to understand and angle their knowledge from the perspective of the opportunity of share value creation and linked interests!

With this being said I must acknowledge the extreme repositioning SC is doing compared to other NGOs dealing with child's rights. I come to realize that this is a very controversial development, comparing SC with other child's right organisations would surely not been a fair game for the others, as SC is light years ahead of them all.

## **6.2 Future Research Questions**

The following question was addressed in the discussion and are here summarized as potential future research ventures:

- How does interaction values accumulation support and define value frame fusion in cross-sector collaborations?
- How can we better assess and distinguish different levels of integration in integrative partnerships (as the overlap between highly developed transactional partnerships and integrative partnerships seems very large in the CVC framework)?
- How can interaction values which have accumulated in an organisation cause spill-over effects throughout the organisation dealing with less interactive partnerships?

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## Appendix 1 – Interview Guide

### Support questions

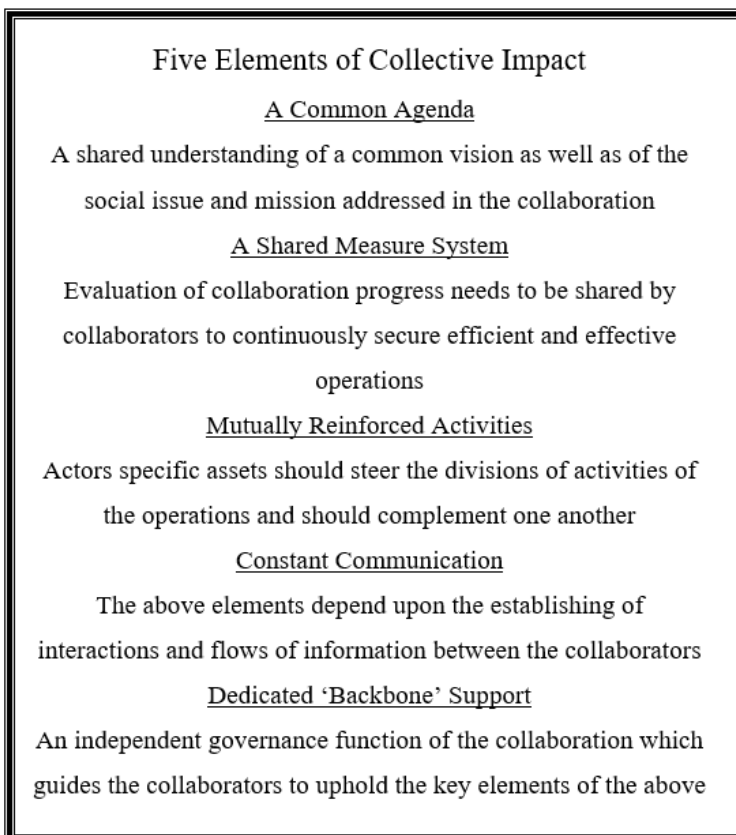
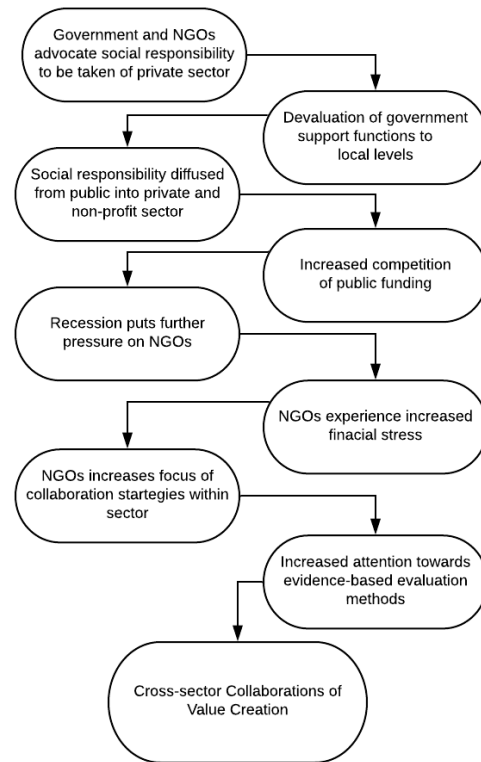
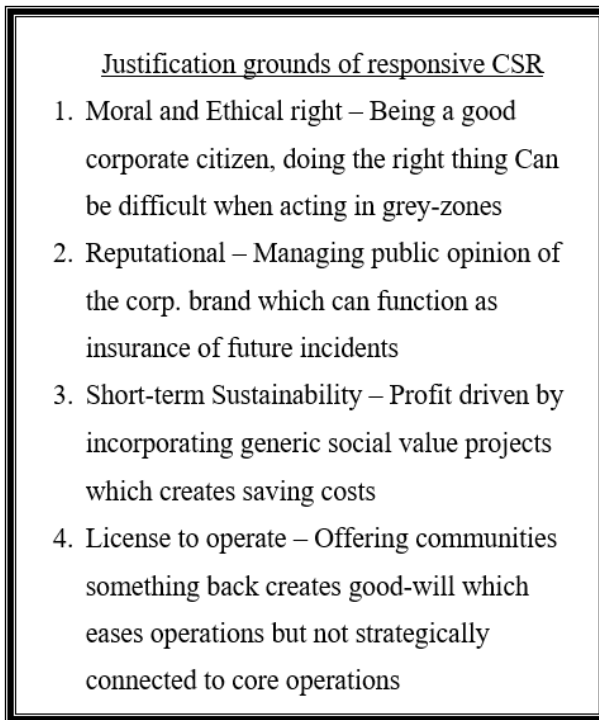
- How are stakeholder expression incorporated in partnerships? What does it look like in practice?
- What factors/Enablers are making these collaboration work? What is crucial for the social impact?
- How are collaborations with partners achieved? What seems important when getting started?
- How are collaborations sustained with partners? What happens at the end?
- How is it possible to together create value with different agendas? Are they different?

Theme	Thematic Questions for Interview	
	English	Swedish
<b>General</b>	Name Age Education Work experience Current position	Namn Ålder Utbildning Arbetserfarenhet Nuvarande anställning
	What do you/your unit work on?	Berätta vad du/din enhet arbetar med?
	What is the purpose of your work?	Vad ämnar ditt arbete att uppnå?
<b>Formation</b>	What types of collaborations is of interest for you?	Vad för typer av samarbeten intresserar er?
	What is the view on establishing collaborations where co-creation is in focus with business partners?	Vad är synen på att etablera samarbeten, inom ramen för gemensamt arbete med företagspartners?
Achieve	Does the view/policy differ from the practice?	Skiljer sig synen/policyn från hur det ser ut i realiteten?
Achieve	How is a collaboration with partners achieved?	Hur möjliggör ni samarbeten med era partners?

Achieve	When searching for business-partners, what do you look for? Is there a finished routine?	När ni letar efter företagssamarbeten, vad tittar ni då på? Finns det en färdig rutin?
Achieve	What are the results or outcomes you specifically want to accomplish through collaborations with corporations?	Vad för typ av resultat eller utfall ser ni specifikt som önskvärt i era samarbeten med företag?
Sustain	How do you renew collaborations?	Hur förnyar ni samarbeten?
Sustain	Is their value in renewing collaborations? What value?	Finns det värde i ett förnyat samarbete? Vad för värde?
Sustain	How is risk assessment carried out when collaborating with business partners?	Hur görs riskanalyser inför samarbeten med företag partners?
Unregulated/ Institutionalized	How often do you conduct unregulated or informal conversations with business partners?	Hur ofta har ni oreglerade eller inofficiella samtal med företag partners som skapar värde?
<b>Value frames</b>	How is it possible to merge a profit-based agenda with a non-profit?	Hur är det möjligt att sammanslå en vinstdrivande agenda med en ideell i ett samarbete?
Social vs Profit	How do you measure value in collaborations with business partners?	Hur mäter ni värdet av ett samarbete med ett företagssamarbete?
	Is it possible to see failure of finding common ground as an opportunity?	Är det möjligt att se misslyckade av att hitta en gemensam plattform att mötas på som en möjlighet?
<b>Level</b>	Is there ever a cross-sectorial team connected to collaborations with business partners?	Tillsätter ni cross-sektor team inom samarbeten med företags partners?
	How often are collaborations started with an open/empty agenda?	Hur ofta påbörjas samarbeten med en öppen/tom agenda?

<b>Child's rights focus</b>	How do you in your work implement the Convention of Rights of the Child?	Hur närvarande är barnkonventionen i ert arbete?
	How is the child's right to expression present in the collaborations with corporations?	Hur närvarande är barnets rätt till att få sin röst hörd närvarande i arbetet med samarbeten med företag?
	How ensure that the agenda for the collaboration imbedded in the children effected by it?	Hur säkrar ni att agendan inom ett samarbete är förankrad hos barn som berörs?

## Appendix 2 - Figures



## Sources of Collaboration Values

### Resource Nature

Can be either generic (i.e. cash) or organisational specific (i.e. knowledge)

### Resource Directionality

Concerns the deployment and the flow of the resource (i.e. unilaterally or bilaterally)

### Resource Complementarity

Collaborators ability to complement each other's unmet need of resources

### Linked interest

Having a shared interest in the benefits of the value created for the other partner

## Types of Collaboration Values

### Transferred Resource Values

The benefit of receiving resources from a partner

### Associational Values

The benefit of being associated with the other collaborated partners organisation values

### Interaction Values

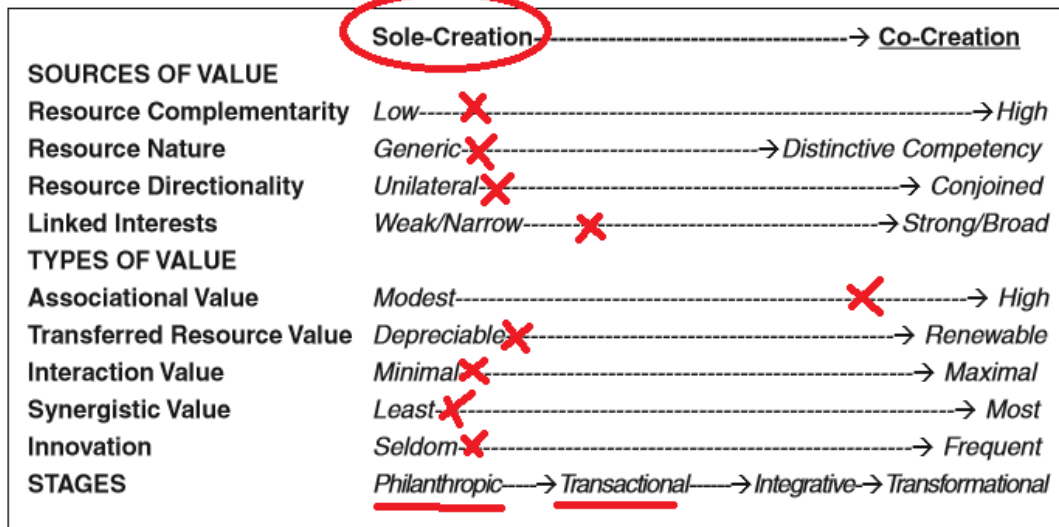
The intangible benefit gained by interacting with the partner as they collaborate

### Synergetic Values

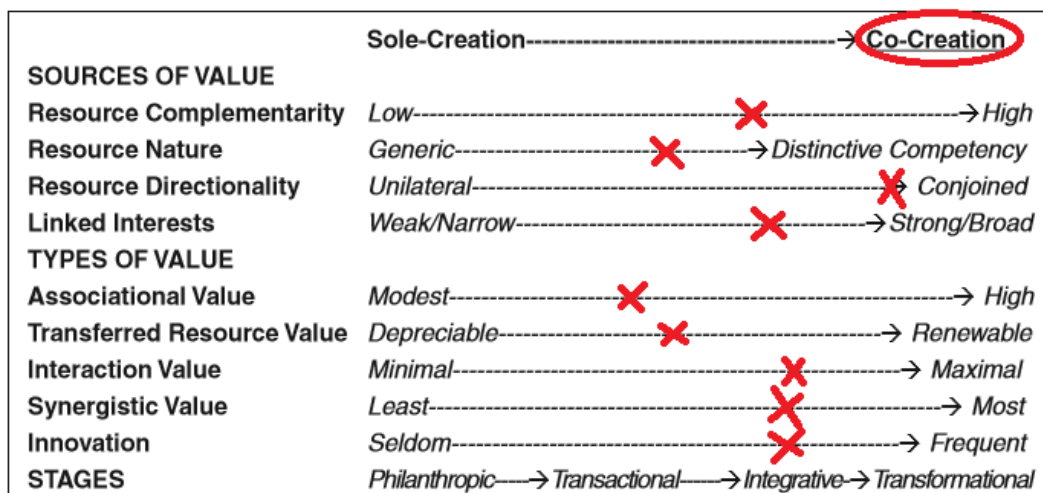
An innovative benefit which arise within the collaborating process and not accessible independently



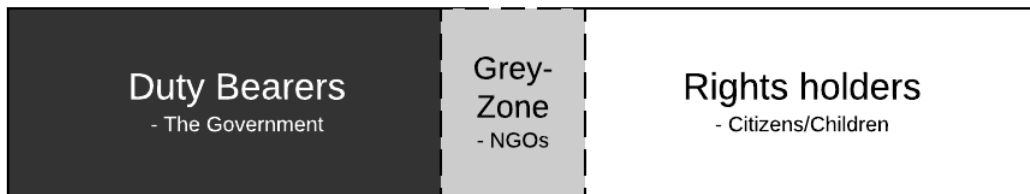
# SC's Financial Partnerships



# SC's Collaborative Partnerships



## A Traditional View of Rights Actors



## An Expanded View of Rights Actors

