



Pulling up the anchors

Findings from qualitative research with partnerships professionals at charities and companies

● FUNDRAISING: CORPORATE
Ian MacQuillin
July 2020

Remarkable
Partnerships
ROGARE
THE FUNDRAISING THINK TANK

Contents

Executive summary	03
1. Introduction	05
2. Why do charities and companies embark on partnerships	11
2.1 Charities	11
2.2 Companies	14
3. How much do people know about partnerships?	18
3.1 Charity sector knowledge	18
3.2 Corporate sector knowledge	26
3.3 Knowledge of management and leadership	29
4. Organisational support for ambitious partnerships	32
4.1 Underpinning negative attitudes and perceptions	32
4.2 Securing organisational support - creating a sense of collective ambition	36
5. Other issues and barriers	40
5.1 Organisation size	40
5.2 Metrics and measurements	41
5.3 Power imbalance	43
5.4 Role of corporate 'fundraisers'	44
6. Purpose-driven companies - threat or opportunity?	47
6.1 Threat	47
6.2 Opportunity	48
6.3 Further risks	50
7. How will the Coronavirus pandemic impact ambitious partnerships	52
7.1 Generally pessimistic	52
7.2 Potential positives for the future	55
8. Conclusion and next steps	57
Appendix A - list of interviewees	60
Appendix B - Research questions	61
References	65
Rogare Associate Members	66

Rogare (Latin for 'to ask') is the independent think tank for the global fundraising profession. We are the engine that translates academic ideas into professional practice, and we aim to bring about a paradigm shift in the way fundraisers use theory and evidence to solve their professional challenges.

All Rogare's projects and outputs - can be found on the Rogare website - www.rogare.net

Follow us on Twitter: @RogareFTT

Or search for the Critical Fundraising Forum on Facebook.

Suggested citation:

MacQuillin, I.R. (2020). *Pulling up the anchors: Findings from qualitative research with partnerships professionals at charities and companies*. London: Rogare - The Fundraising Think Tank.

Ian MacQuillin MInstF(Dip) is the director of the international fundraising think tank Rogare, which he founded in 2014. He's recognised as a leading thinker on fundraising ethics, having developed a new theory of fundraising ethics that seeks to balance fundraisers' duties to both their donors and beneficiaries. Ian edits the Critical Fundraising blog and runs and moderates the Critical Fundraising Forum on Facebook, which has more than 1,1000 critically-minded fundraisers from all over the world. He writes a regular column for Third Sector magazine and regularly contributes to the specialist charity media around the world. Ian is also an in-demand speaker on the global fundraising conference circuit.

© Rogare and respective authors. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission from the publisher. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, the publisher cannot accept responsibility for any errors it may contain.

Executive summary

Ambitious charity partnerships are those that aim to create more value than is currently being created in, by or through existing partnerships (s1.1).

This paper uses a framework created by Austin (2000) and Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b) called the Collaboration Continuum, on which partnerships range from Philanthropic to Transactional to Integrative to Transformational (s1.1).

Value at the Philanthropic/Transactional end is often transferred value such as money; whereas more society value and change is created through Integrative and Transformational partnerships (s1.1)

However, there are a number of potential barriers that inhibit the creation of more ambitious partnerships (s1.2)

Partnerships struggle to move out of the Philanthropic/Transactional end of the Collaboration Continuum. There is a 'short-term transactional anchor' that keeps dragging them back. (s3.1.3)

This anchor is given weight by the lack of knowledge of partnerships professionals (ss3.1, 3.2) about how to build more ambitious partnerships and a lack of understanding about the needs of and challenges facing their focal partner organisations.

This includes a lack of knowledge about 'strategic' partnerships, which are often not really strategic in the sense as would be required for an Integrative partnerships, but often glorified Transactional partnerships (3.1.2c).

There is a transactional 'comfort zone' whereby people keep doing what they have always done and are used to.

This gives further weight to the anchor because these transactional partnerships come with short-term financial targets that are often (usually) imposed from above (ss3.1.2, 3.1.3).

The anchor is given further weight by a lack of knowledge and understanding of partnerships among leadership and management at charities and companies (s3.3) and negative attitudes about the other (s4.1).

This research found that, following several high profile case of media allegations of malpractice in charities, companies consider the potential reputational risk of working with charities in the same way the charities consider the reputational risk of working with a company that has a poor public image (s4.1).

But internal support for ambitious partnerships is key to their success and its absence is a huge inhibitor (s4.1)

To secure organisational support, partnerships professionals need to create and foster a sense of 'collective ambition' to create more value through partnerships (s4.2). Collective ambition is:

"A shared sense of purpose, how a company will fulfil it and track progress and how leaders and others will behave every day as they achieve and sustain excellence."

This will need to be done by changing the narrative around partnerships from an 'aspiration' to have a particular type of partnership to an ambition to create more value. Ambition thus becomes a mindset that charities can enter into, a mindset that can change be used to engage management and leadership (s4.2).

Knowledge about how to create such a narrative may need to be added to the skillset of partnerships managers (s4.2); while new training/educational courses and materials may be needed to raise the knowledge of partnerships professionals (s3.1).

Part of creating a new narrative will be to produce new impact reporting metrics to measure the value created and social outcomes achieved by CCPs (s5.2). Company interviewees gave 'doing good' and delivering 'societal outcomes' as major reasons for embarking on partnerships with charities (s2.2), but also noted the difficulty in measuring this (s5.2), and expressed frustration that these outcomes were not always communicated by charities (ss4.1, 5.2).

The role of corporate 'fundraisers' may need to be re-evaluated if they are to achieve all these things, along with whether partnerships should be sited outside of the fundraising department (s5.4)

Separately to the main themes of this research:

Charities perceive the rise of purpose-driven brands - whereby companies aim to deliver societal outcomes on their own, without necessarily working with an NPO - to be a serious threat to ambitious CCPs (6.1), although this does also present opportunities (s6.2).

And both charities and companies are generally pessimistic about the impact the Coronavirus pandemic will have on ambitious partnerships (s7.1); although they do see tentative green shoots for the future (s7.2)

In summary then, the central hypothesis of this paper is therefore:

A lack of knowledge among leadership about partnership processes and partner organisation drives a culture that does not buy-in to ambitious partnerships.

While a lack of knowledge of partnership professionals is a significant barrier to securing internal organisational support.

1. Introduction

1.1 Summary of the literature review

This report extends the research into ambitious charity-corporate partnerships (CCPs) begun with our previous review of the literature on this topic, which established the concept of 'ambition' in CCPs, and thus what is meant by an 'ambitious' partnerships (MacQuillin 2020), which we conceptualised ambition in charity-corporate partnerships as:

"A desire to create more value than is currently being created in, by or through existing partnerships."

Based on the work and models devised by Austin (2000) and Austin and Seitanidi (2012a, 2012b), there are four types of value that can be shared and created through partnerships. These are:

1. Associational value - benefits derived simply by being in a partnership, e.g. credibility
2. Transferred resource value - the benefit a partner gets from receiving a particular resource
3. Interaction value - intangibles that derive from the processes of partners working together such as reputation, trust, learning, knowledge etc.
4. Synergistic value - value that emerges out of partners working together that they could not have created on their own, often resulting in major change at society level.

That value derives from four different sources:

1. Complementary resource - providing resources the other partner doesn't have (such as money or reputation)
2. Nature of the resource - whether it is a generic resource that any partner could have supplied (such as money) or a specific resource that only the partner could have supplied (such as specialist expertise)
3. Direction of resource flow - whether it goes from only from one partner to another (unilateral) or goes both ways (bilateral)
4. Linked interest - how the interests of partner organisations are shared or linked; the self-interest of one organisation is linked to the value they create for the other - in other words, helping the other partner helps you.

More change can be created with interaction value and synergistic value, and so ambitious CCPs are those that aim to create more *interaction value* and *synergistic value*. We can therefore add to our definition of ambition in CCPs:

Ambitious CCPs aim to create systemic social change.

Or

The more ambitious a CCP is, the more it aims to create systemic social change.

Or

To create systemic social change, those embarking on CCPs need to be ambitious to create the greatest amount of value.

It is important to state that ambition is about creating value. Partnerships are the vehicles by which that value is created. And different types of partnerships can create different types of value. The literature review (the first stage of this project) used Austin and Seitanidi's (2012a, 2012b) Collaboration Continuum (CC) as the main framework through which different types of partnership can be ambitious.

The CC specifies four different types of partnership at different stages:

1. Philanthropic - company gives cash to a charity (*unilateral* resource flow)
2. Transactional - *bilateral* exchanges of resources, thorough mechanisms as cause-related marketing, licensing and sponsorship
3. Integrative - where partner organisations with high levels of *linked interests* align their values and missions, and combine their assets and skills/knowledge to create new resources, rather than swap resources they already have. This allows them to innovate solutions together that neither could have achieved on their own
4. Transformational - the most advanced (and most speculative and least supported by evidence) stage: "collaborative social entrepreneurship" that creates transformational change through "disruptive social innovation".

More *interaction value* and *synergistic value* is created through *Integrative* and *Transformational* partnerships, and so it is likely that the more ambitious partnerships will be at *Integrative/Transformational* end of the continuum - the direction of ambition goes along the CC from Philanthropic to Transformational.

But what is important is that the ambition is to create value, not an ambition to have a particular type of partnerships, and charities and companies will - or rather, ought to - choose the type of partnership that will allow them to create the value they want or need.

Moreover, there is the locus of where this value is created. Value can also be created internally or externally to the partnership, and at different levels, with benefit accruing to:

- Individuals (micro level), such as beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and customers
- Organisations (meso level)
- Society (macro level), where radical and transformative systemic societal change occurs.

Finally value can be economic, environmental, or social. Economic value tends to benefit the partners directly whereas social value benefits society at large beyond the stakeholders of just the partner organisations.

1.2 Barriers to ambition

However the review paper also identified what could be several potential barriers to creating ambitious partnerships. So these are not barriers to partnerships per se, but barriers to more ambitious partnerships.

On the charity side, these were:

- Lack of knowledge or understanding about corporate fundraising/partnership management practice.
- Lack of resources
- Lack of support/buy-in from rest of organisation
- Competitive and crowded marketplace
- Negative attitudes to working with companies, including keeping a safe 'ideological distance'
- Normative attitudes about philanthropy - the idea that companies ought to give money rather than seek partnerships
- Potential power imbalances/asymmetry in a partnership - i.e. the company holds more power and can dictate terms
- A mindset at companies that doesn't seek greater engagement with NPOs
- Companies believe they do not need a partner to create 'shared' social value and embark on doing this themselves through vehicles such as B-Corps or other social enterprises
- Risk of failure
- Smaller size of a nonprofit.

For companies, the possible barriers to ambition were:

- Lack of knowledge about partnerships best practice
- A mindset at companies that doesn't seek greater engagement with NPOs
- Shareholders are concerned partnerships will damage their company's profitability
- Distrust of skills/qualities of NPOs to deliver partnership objectives
- Company believes it does not need a partner to create 'shared' social value
- Decision maker does not fully understand the CSR policy
- Company views partnership merely as a compliance measure
- Misperception in how company and charity see their partnership
- Smaller size of a company
- Smaller companies believe their expectations will not be met by a partnership.

1.3 Qualitative research phase

To further explore the possible barriers to more ambitious charity-corporate partnerships, we embarked on qualitative research with a series of semi-structured interviews designed to test whether these barriers were perceived to exist. We spoke to nine corporate fundraisers/partnerships practitioners from the charity sector and seven CSR/partnerships practitioners from the corporate sector. A list of interviewees can be found at Appendix A. Interviews were conducted by the author, and Jonathan Andrews and Andy King of Remarkable Partnerships.

The questions were for each group - charity and company - were designed to mirror each other.

The first questions asked why they thought charities/companies embarked on partnerships with each other.

The second asked participants for their opinions on whether practitioners had sufficient knowledge to be able to put in place more ambitious partnerships

The third asked about negative attitudes that might get in the way of more ambitious partnerships.

The four asked what they thought would be the response of boards and senior management to more ambitious partnerships.

The fifth question asked what they might be thought the risks associated with more ambitious partnerships.

The sixth question sought to explore how important partnerships were considered to be in achieving a charity's mission or a company's business objectives.

And the seventh asked if respondents whether they thought the rise of purpose driven brands through various social enterprise vehicles such as B-Corps represented a threat or an opportunity for charities.

This qualitative phase was begun before the Coronavirus pandemic took hold in the UK and forced the lockdown measures we experienced starting at the end of March. So during the interview stage we added an eighth question that asked interviewees how they thought the pandemic would impact on more ambitious partnerships.

A full list of the questions can be found at Appendix B.

The analysis of the data takes a Grounded Theory approach (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Ground Theory is an approach to qualitative research that seems to robustly and reliably identify themes and categories in the data and arrange these into a theoretical narrative that identifies causes and outcomes. This report does not therefore present data, analysis, findings and recommendations as responses to the various questions - in other words, it is not structured with discrete sections looking at responses to/analysis of each question. Rather it aims to extract the main themes. The report is thus arranged thematically.

1.4 Structure of this report

The two main and consistent themes that emerge from this analysis are a lack of knowledge (among both practitioners and leadership) and a lack of support/buy in from leadership (partly caused by their lack of knowledge of partnerships). Not only are these the two most important barriers to greater ambition in charity-corporate partnerships, that they either underpin many other barriers, or these barriers reduced to one of these two. For example, overcoming, correcting, or levelling out any power imbalances in CCPs depends on practitioners having the knowledge that such an imbalance is likely to exist, and why it exists. This knowledge provides practitioners insights in how to tackle the issue, but they need the support of their peers and leaders to put such measures in place.

The two main sections in the report therefore look at knowledge (s3) and internal buy-in and advocacy (s4).

Prior to that, s2 looks at the why charities and companies embark on partnerships with each other, interprets this in terms of the types of value and research described by Austin and Seitanidi's (2011a, 2012b) model, and contrasts the different approaches and aspirations of companies and charities.

Having then explored the main themes of knowledge and internal support, the paper looks at some specific barriers and issues, including size, power imbalance in CCPs, metrics for measuring partnerships, and the role of fundraisers (s5)

The final two sections explore the threats/opportunities presented by the rise of purpose driven brands and the potential impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on ambitious partnerships are presented as separate sections (s6 and s7 respectively), since they sit outside the main narrative of the research.

1.5 Notes on the research

The research participants are quote anonymously throughout this report, identified by which sector they come from and a letter, e.g. Charity Interviewee B or Company Interviewee D. The letters are randomly assigned to the research participants to preserve their anonymity.

In this research we asked participants to give us their views on issues affecting their sector and specialism, and what they thought sector/industry practice or consensus on these issues was. We did not always ask for their own opinions. So a caveat to reading this report (especially if you think you can identify one of the participants), is that any quote does not necessarily mean that this is the personal opinion of the author of this quote. For instance, if they say that a main reason that charities seek partnerships is to fund services, it does not necessarily mean they believe partnerships should be used mainly to fund services.

So if you are reading this report and think it comes across a too negative, because you can point to many excellent examples of charity-company partnerships, then please keep this caveat in mind.

Of course there are good examples and excellent professional on both sides. But this is not what we were asking about in this research. We weren't asking interviewees to describe out exemplars of best practice that other should aspire to, but what they thought was the current of state of play so we could use that insight to identify the barriers that might stand in the way of others emulating the exemplars.

Finally, the analysis and interpretation of this data, and therefore the insights drawn from it, its conclusions and recommendations, do not claim to be definitive. However, we do think we are advance some very plausible hypotheses, even though more research is desirable to further test and flesh out (as further research is almost always desirable).

1.6 Glossary of abbreviations

CC - Collaboration Continuum

CCP - Charity-corporate partnership

CotY - Charity of the year

CSR - Corporate social responsibility

CVC - Collaboration Value Creation

NPO - Nonprofit organisation (in this report used interchangeably with 'charity' for sake of editorial variation).

2. Why do charities and companies embark on partnerships with each other?

The first question posed to interviewees was a very general and very open one: what did they think were the main reasons that companies/charities embarked on partnerships and what outcomes did they hope to achieve? This was asked without providing any context of what we meant by 'ambitious' partnerships. This would allow us to assess if many of the reasons given would be for more ambitious outcomes. It was only after they had answered this question that they were provided with the conception of 'ambitious' CCPs devised for this project.

The responses quite clearly show a difference between charities and companies.

2.1 Why do charities embark on partnerships with companies?

By far and away the main reason given by charity sector participants was for financial resource - in other words, money.

"My feeling is I think a lot of think a lot of charities do go into this kind of, with the sort of the finance hats on first and foremost."

Charity Interviewee 9

"So I think in terms of outcomes, most organizations go to corporates because they think they're going to get a financial outcome. And lots do that often from employee fundraising, rather than from a business donation."

Charity Interviewee 1

"Well, they always want of course, is [the company's] income. I don't think we should, but I'd still say that's top of the list most cases."

Charity Interviewee 5

"And I think traditionally, charities would have engaged simply because it was a new avenue for funding."

Charity Interviewee 6

The importance of money/cash/financial benefit is not surprising nor is it in shocking. Corporate fundraising is 'fundraising' and fundraising is focused on bringing in voluntary (i.e. discretionary) income to charities.

Money as a reason for/benefit of a CCP can be grouped under a heading of 'standard' reasons for wanting a partnership, alongside these other reasons that were outlined by charity sector interviewees, for which there as a deal of consensus from participants.

- Awareness raising and brand recognition
- Leveraging business knowledge

- Reaching new audiences through the corporate partner, including the customers and employees.

There were also some other reasons, which were suggested by just one or two interviewees each.

- Upskilling the charity workforce (Charity interviewee 3)
- Influencing the company

“As companies become more responsive to their impact as a triple bottom line type approach, charities, I think [have] an opportunity to influence behavior, to influence perceptions around the public, to run joint campaigns collaborate, that sort of thing... And so partnerships are just so fundamental to what we do because the private sector is having one of the biggest impacts on the planet.”

Charity interviewee 2

- Helping charities achieve their mission

“I think ultimately I think they can add a massive amount of value to what charities are trying to do in terms of helping them achieve their sort of overarching ambitions and goals as for their particular purpose.”

Charity interviewee 9

“And so partnerships are just so fundamental to what we do because the private sector is having one of the biggest impacts on the planet. [You can] come up with a unique proposition that that is so core to what the charity does is, so core to what the company does.”

Charity interviewee 2

Thinking of these in terms of Austin and Seitaindi’s (2012a, 212b) concepts of value and sources of value, the ‘standard’ reasons are largely about complementary resources, (the company is providing what the charity doesn’t have). They are also generic, in that any company, by and large, could provide them. And they are unilateral in that they flow from the company to the charity.

The value they provide to the charity is mainly a transferred value, which is the value one partner (in this case the charity) gets from the resource that is transferred to it from the other partner. Money is the exemplar of transferred value.

Some of the value of the reasons/benefits outlined above is interaction value, in that it arises out of the partners working together, particularly upskilling the charity workforce.

But by and large, charity sector participants spoke about the reasons for engaging in partnerships using unambitious language. They described the type of resource and value that mostly comprises Philanthropic and Transactional partnerships (as conceptualised on Austin and Seitaindi’s Collaboration Continuum), whereas most societal value starts to be created through interaction and synergistic value at the level of Integrative partnerships.

Of the benefits given by charity interviewees in response to the first question, only 'influencing the company' and 'achieving' the mission amount to the most ambitious synergistic value.

And they are also talking about benefits that accrue to their own stakeholders (their beneficiaries - external micro locus) or their own organisation (internal meso locus). (Refer to the introduction if you need a reminder of these terms.)

And this is in contrast to how corporate sector interviewees spoke in response to the same question, as we shall discuss shortly.

Now, we have to remember, as was stated in the introduction, that the interviewees are not giving their opinions on how they think charity partnerships ought to be run, or on how they would do it if they were in charge, but how they perceive many or most charities understand the need for partnerships.

And while helping a charity achieve its mission was hardly mentioned at all specifically - compared to company interviewees, who spoke about 'societal outcomes' and 'making a difference' - this could be because it is taken as read that partnerships are there to help a charity achieve its mission, and so this is not stated explicitly.

There are many ways that partnerships with companies could help charities achieve their missions, but the responses to this question focus mainly on transferred value, and mainly hard cash. As will see as we get further into analysing the data, there are very good reasons for believing that charities are anchored in a transactional mindset that is predicated on acquiring transferred value, and the way charity sector interviewees responded to the first question reflects that.

However charity sector interviewees also say that there is shift away from transactional partnerships, such as sponsorships and Charity of the Year, and that there are problems/issues with focusing on financial benefit as the main reason for wanting a partnerships:

"Yeah, I think attitudes generally, across fundraising, I do see a change happening in terms of corporate relationships and working more and the transformational teams being ambitious being strategic."

Charity Interviewee 3

"But, you know, so for a long time, and when I started doing this, what 16 years ago, it was all about charities of the year it was all about employee fundraising and so on. And I think the shift has only really embedded itself and started to speed up quite recently."

Charity Interviewee 5

"I think charities are now fully aware that the way that businesses want to give is changing, and businesses aren't just interested in handing over a cheque and saying do something good. You know, come back in a couple of years and tell us what you did with it. It's much more about a strategic partnership that is that's clear, tangible outputs, and I think that

presents challenges for charities who invariably would prefer just to have access to unrestricted funds."

Charity interviewee 6

"Charities generally – or the successful ones – are becoming much more alive to the potential that businesses have to support their mission in much more tangible ways. And that doesn't necessarily involve just handing over coming over a cheque."

Charity interviewee 6

All the benefits and reasons provided by charity sector interviewees were about benefits to the charity. None spoke about providing direct benefits to the company as a reason for entering into the partnership, even though they said it was essential to be able to understand how companies and industry sectors worked (see s3.1). Which brings us to the reasons corporate sector interviewees gave.

2.2 Why do companies embark on partnerships with charities?

Company interviewees also had their own set of 'standard' reasons that described the transferred and associational value of working in partnerships with charities, which focused on their maintaining a commercial or competitive advantage, particularly through the associational value that comes from being in the partnerships, such as brand building through an enhanced reputation and public image. Though none spoke about commercial benefits such as increased sales through cause-related marketing.

"There are great commercial reasons why firms want to have corporate partnerships, and that is pure brand building. And in those situations, I think it's important for them that they look for charities or organisations that are well known."

Company interviewee 1

"Probably more from a commercial perspective, you know, that corporates almost felt like having a charity partner, validated them as a, you know, a socially responsible business."

Company interviewee 7

"It is definitely about making sure that the company is seen in a positive light and corporate engagement with a particular charity reflects well on the corporation."

Company interviewee 2

Benefits to the company also included the ability to access a charity's expertise (interaction value) and to reach their audiences (transferred value), engage with their own stakeholders (e.g. local government – this could be associational or interaction value), and to better engage their own staff (interaction value) and to recruit new staff, particularly Millennial and Generation Zs, who would expect a company to have such partnerships in place (associational value). Such reasons were also recognised by a number of the charity interviewees.

"From an educational perspective, if it's a really well aligned partnership, having that partnership with those experts in that charity is going to help that business become better at what they do."

Company interviewee 7

"As we have a new workforce, a younger workforce in many industries and in particular in the tech industries, they're realising that they need to provide staff with this type of opportunity, and it is proven to support and help recruitment and retention of staff."

Company interviewee 1

But over and above these direct benefits to the company, company interviewees repeatedly spoke about their social responsibility to make a difference and deliver outcomes for society.

"I think that more and more businesses these days really want to use their corporate partnership to do good and to have impacts. Yeah, make a difference."

Company interviewee 7

"Companies will partner and with charities in order to be a responsible business in order to actually genuinely do good. And to invest some of their money that they get...in actually being able to make a difference."

Company interviewee 1

"So there's definitely I would hope in any good partnership anyway. The first outcome is companies are looking at is sizeable outcomes... that there is a certain impact on society that we're trying to make. So we would want to achieve that through some of our charity partnerships."

Company interviewee 4

It can't be discerned at what locus how 'doing good' to achieve societal outcomes will be achieved. It could be that what is meant is that companies simply transfer value to charities through Philanthropic or Transactional partnerships and simply by doing so they are 'doing good'. Incidentally, company interviewees rarely spoke about providing specific benefits, such as money, the way the charity interviewees spoke about wanting to receive the same specific benefits.

So the corporate sector interviewees could be talking about the same type of partnerships with the same type of value as the charity interviewees, but are just using different language to do so: charity sector interviewees talk about money and reaching new audiences, while company interviewees described these same things as 'helping society' and 'doing good'. This would put the locus of value at the internal micro locus (e.g. engaging and recruiting staff) and external meso (their charity partner)

Or it could be that the corporate sector interviewees are talking about making much bigger transformative changes to society. When Company Interviewee 4 says there is a "certain impact on society" their company is trying to make, we can probably safely infer this impact is not a Charity of the Year deal with a charity.

This would mean that companies are talking about systemic social change at the external macro level, and this is most likely to be achieved through Integrative and Transformational partnerships with nonprofit organisations.

"I think generally speaking, companies realize that they can't achieve everything they want to achieve. On that as an organisation, you don't work in silos, you work as part of an ecosystem, you know, your local community, etc. And you may have ambitions, or you may have, as part of your purpose, you might have societal ambitions you're trying to achieve. And it's actually very often a lot more efficient and fruitful to do that in partnership with organisation."

Company interviewee 4

Moreover, company interviewees stressed that it was not just about doing good, but 'genuinely' doing good and to be seen as authentic, because being perceived as inauthentic and not genuine could undermine the associational value of the good reputation and public image they get from partnering with charities.

This touches of a further point described by interviewees and something that was also described in the literature review (MacQuillin 2020, s5.7), that some companies engage in partnerships (and CSR more generally) as a way of meeting the expectation that they ought to be doing good.

2.3 Summary and analysis

There is an asymmetry in how charity and company interviewees described the reasons for embarking on partnerships with each other.

Charity sector interviewees described very specific benefits that would accrue to the charity that could all be delivered through Philanthropic and Transactional partnerships, but did not mention at all delivering benefits to their partner organisations.

Companies were of course cognisant of the benefits that accrued directly to them through partnerships with charities. But they also spoke of providing benefits to society at large and to be seen to be 'genuinely' doing this. To achieve this they would need to locate value externally at the meso (society) locus and bring about change using synergistic value.

Company interviewees were thus talking about partnerships in more ambitious terms. Now this may well have been because charities do not need to talk about the need to make society change, because that is their day job. But it could mean that talking about partnerships in less ambitious, more conservative language that sees partnerships mainly as a resources of transferred value limits the way charities can engage with companies. That can only be stated as a hypothesis in the light of this data, and not stated with any degree of certainty.

But it does chime with one study covered in the literature review (MacQuillin 2020, s5.8). This study by Cho and Kelly (2014) found that charity and company partnership managers

shared a 'false consensus' regarding transactional partnerships. Fundraisers see transactional CCPs as a *quid pro quo*, but CSR managers did not see it that way. The talk of achieving 'societal' outcomes in this research could be a manifestation of this issue - that when CSR managers talk about achieving societal outcomes, they are really talking about exchanging a transferred resource such as money for associational value such as reputation, but do not see the relationship in those terms.

However, whatever the reason, there appears to be a disconnect in the language used to talk about the reasons for embarking on partnerships, which could present an opportunity for charities to engage companies in a different way, particularly in providing them with better ways to measure and assess the impact to society they want to make (see s5.2).

3. How much do people know about partnerships?

The literature review that commenced this project highlighted a lack of knowledge in both corporate and charity sectors as a potentially major barrier to implementing ambitious partnerships (MacQuillin 2020, especially s5.1 and 5.7).

Participants to this qualitative research phase concur with this, painting a remarkably similar picture for both charity and company interviews. In a nutshell – knowledge is lacking.

3.1 Charity sector knowledge

The consensus among the charity sector interviewees is that corporate fundraising/partnerships management at charities requires knowledge and skill, that this knowledge can be and should be learned and acquired, but that it is too often lacking, which presents a barrier to putting in place more ambitious partnerships.

While there was consensus that acquiring these skills is also done ‘on the job’ the view that this is something that cannot be learned and can only be acquired through experience was a minority view expressed by just one respondent (who we are keeping completely anonymous):

“I don't think it's something that you learn. It's about experience. So I don't think it's something that you can go off and just learn.”

There is a considerable debate about whether fundraising is a ‘science’ or an ‘art’ and whether it can be formally taught or the skills of a fundraiser are something that a practitioner acquires at the knee of established professionals. This is something that is discussed in Beth Breeze’s book *The New Fundraisers* (Breeze 2017) and in a forthcoming Rogare report that looks at entry pathways into the fundraising profession (MacQuillin, forthcoming).

It is the view of the author of this report that the body of knowledge that underpins professional fundraising practice can be acquired by the same methods that techniques that other professions use, including similar profession such as PR and marketing. And since the majority of participants in the research are of similar mind, this paper proceeds with that assumption, even though some acknowledged that they didn’t acquire their knowledge in any formal setting.

This section on charity knowledge takes the following structure:

- First, it looks at how knowledge and understanding of how companies operate is essential, but that this is often missing.
- Then it describes a tripartite, or three-way, division of work in good partnership management as outlined by one of our interviewees: a back office/support functions; good stewardship and relationship building; and strategic planning.

3.1.1 Understanding how companies work

Some of the most essential knowledge that charity partnership managers need to have is an understanding of how companies and industry sectors operate; that you need to understand business to work with business.

"There's a place here fundamentally, [for] corporate fundraisers and corporate project managers to actually understand what are the specific business challenges are to potential partners and come up with a way of solving those in a way that's also beneficial for the charity.

"But in order to do that, you need that knowledge and you need to be able to be given the options to go out and acquire that knowledge, whether it's through conversations or training.

"I think there does need to be a focus on that side of things in terms of building that stock rather than just looking at the nuts and bolts of how to fundraise or how to pitch and all this stuff."

Charity interviewee 6

"So I think once you've established that business relationship with them and that trust, it's really about getting under the skin of the business, understanding their aims, but more importantly, understanding the challenges, because that's where I think you can really add value to a partnership when you truly understand the challenges of the business and the industry in which they operate. That's where you can make some really remarkable partnership activity happen."

Charity interviewee 9

And so if charities are to help companies achieve the social outcomes the company interviewee spoke about in s2, which might help them move the partnerships from the Transactional stage to an Integrative stage, they need to understand why companies desire and strive for these things.

But too often this understanding is missing:

"Most charities don't understand the market that their corporates are operating in. They don't understand or take the time to understand the key business pressures. What are the challenges that companies trying to solve? In order to be able to develop real partnerships, we need to understand the pinch points and the key conversations that our corporates are having."

Charity interviewee 4

"[There] is perhaps a lack of understanding of their own value as organisations and what they can offer; a lack of understanding about how businesses work and how they want to engage with charities and how they can engage."

Charity interviewee 1

3.1.2 Tripartite nature of partnerships management

Charity Interviewee 5 described a tripartite - or three way - division of work needed to build successful CCPs (not just the ambitious partnerships that aim for more value, but all partnerships): support, relationship building, and strategic planning.

a) Support - the partnerships needs to be backed up not just by solid logistical and administrative support, but also with skilled staff who can collect and write up case studies, write proposals, and prepare cases for support and fundraising propositions.

b) Relationship builder - as with other types of one-to-one fundraisings (major gifts and trusts), partnerships management needs a front-facing person who can successfully build the partnership through personal contact.

"And there's always been a need for someone who can sell the charity well...you need an excellent person to be your front facing. Like, let's call it salesperson, I mean, you know, the person who can establish those relationships, who can meaningfully communicate your vision to a potential partner."

Charity interviewee 5

"You have people who are inherently really good relationship managers."

Charity interviewee 8

"And I think corporate fundraising and major donor fundraising are very similar, right? I think just by the nature of a major donor, for example, that it's highly likely that [they are] successful in business. So you need to be able to mirror them in terms of the way you know, the way you look and dress to a certain to a certain degree, the way you the way you talk and the way you operate in a very professional manner."

Charity interviewee 9

Having those relationship skills helps to build better relationships with companies, and potentially lays the foundation for more ambitious partnerships and we have already encountered above Charity Interviewee 9 talking about "getting under the skin" of partner companies.

However, corporate fundraisers suffer from a failure of donorcentred/relationship fundraising just as many other types of fundraisers do, preferring to talk about partnerships in the language of what the partnerships can do for the charity rather than how it can help the company.

"It's very much we are a great charity. We are a great brand. We are a great fit, because hey, we're both big names in our respective worlds and consumers know who we are. Yes, but that doesn't help the company do what it needs to do. We don't take the time to understand what our partners problems are. We go straight in and show our leg on the first date and hope that we were going to get it get a leg over in the first couple of meetings."

Charity interviewee 4

“And I've often seen charities come up to corporate fundraising from the perspective of what the business can do for them, rather than any idea of mutual benefit and also a lack of understanding about what they can offer the business.”

Charity interviewee 1

So far perhaps this is not particularly remarkable since it describes the aspirations and falling short thereof of many examples of relationship fundraising - corporate fundraising/partnerships management is just another example.

However, there are two insights that can be gleaned. The first is that there is substantial knowledge that underpins relationship building in fundraising that corporate partnerships can use. Beyond the standards text of *Relationship Fundraising* (Burnett 2002) and *Donor-Centered Fundraising* (Burk 2003) there is also the work that Rogare has done on the theory from social psychology that can be used to take relationship fundraising in new directions (Sargeant, MacQuillin and Shang 2016). And of course there is plenty more that corporate fundraisers can adapt to their own discipline. Relationship fundraising can be learned.

The second insight is that the essential knowledge on how companies operate in their industry sectors, and on their CSR operations and motivations, is readily available and ought to be acquired by all corporate fundraisers whose role is to build partnerships with companies (which may not necessarily be all corporate fundraisers), whether that is in the support, relationship building, or strategy function of Charity Interviewee 5's three-part division of the partnership's function.

c) Strategic planning - the third function of corporate partnerships role is strategy. Now we get to a more serious problem with the knowledge that underpins partnerships at charities, that there is a lack of understanding about what strategy is in corporate fundraising or what a strategic partnership actually is. This section of the transcript of the interview with Charity Interviewee 4 is quoted at length:

“I think it comes back to a misunderstanding about what corporate fundraising actually is. On the whole people assume that corporate partnerships and corporate fundraising are one in the same. And we've just stuck the word strategic in it, because it sounds better. Yeah, we don't actually see much strategic corporate partnership work across the sector.

“And most charities are approaching their strategic corporate partnerships around, we will give you our brand you will give us your money; that that's not a strategic partnership. That's still transactional. It's just you've took the word strategic in front of it.

“And there's all too much of that. The use of the word strategy is being used like confetti. It's being applied to everything because that means that everything we do is strategic. It's not. Most of things that we're doing as charities is plans, its activities. It's action work; it's not strategy. I'm yet to find an outstanding example of a charity applying strategy at the right level, and then implementing it across the board.

“Corporate fundraising strategies don't exist. Corporate partnership strategies don't exist, except in a handful of organizations who do get it, who do understand it, and do know

what they're doing. Everybody else is just saying we need to raise money this year, we'll have a strategy on how we're going to do it."

Charity Interviewee 4 is talking about a fundamental misunderstanding at the heart of partnerships at charities, that what are essentially transactional partnerships are being described as 'strategic', because of factors such as brand alignment - for example, a partnership that is considered 'strategic' could be one between a heart charity and a health food company, because they are working in the same area to the same end, even though this might only be something like a cause-related marketing arrangement.

But it is not 'strategy' at the level of an Integrative partnership, where the two partner organisations are coming together to create new value for society that neither could have created on their own.

Yet as we saw in s2, charity interviewees said there had been a shift in focus in recent years away from transactional partnerships towards more 'strategic' ones. But that isn't happening, or at least happening as much as it ought to, or as much as our interviewees would like it to happen.

"I think most people approach corporate partnerships and corporate fundraising as a broader sector, with the right intentions [to find strategic partners], and then end up doing something that's completely different, and there's no reality to what they originally set out to do."

Charity interviewee 5

"However, when I really drill down into the detail of what they do, they still go about that, they still go about working with companies in that traditional sort of way in the sense of the charity of the year type model."

Charity interviewee 9

"Yes, there are lots of models, but you also need the desire and, and the willingness to, to look at those issues in the first place, you know, and I think a lot of organizations, a lot of charities might still be thinking of corporate partners in that old way as transactional, as employee fundraising and so on, and missing out on some of those deeper opportunities."

Charity interviewee 9

So what is going on?

Partly this could be related to the way that our interviewees described the transactional reasons charities embarked on partnerships to acquire mainly transferred value, and talking about partnerships using this type of language could present a barrier to moving towards the more ambitious types of partnerships (Integrative and Transformational) that can create more value. Perhaps the language used is creating its own barrier, and so the solution is to change the way fundraising talk about partnerships?

This could certainly help. However, we would probably look for a more obvious cause for why charities have set out to be 'strategic', but fall back to being transactional. That

intuitive causal factor is the main metric or KPI that is used to measure the success of partnerships - money - and the short-term financial targets partnerships are burden with.

Charity Interviewee 4 says that the “world of corporate is moving on” - looking for social outcomes and even delivering social purpose itself through social enterprise (see s6) but that charities are “still stuck in very transactional short-term goals and wins”, and adds:

“And when you bring things down to the short-term challenges, [it] always come back to how much money with short-term wins, but it's mainly focused on very transactional fundraising and income generation.”

There is consensus around this short-term barrier.

“If you're a head of or whatever, whatever it might be in your [charity] and you have very clear stringent targets to be hitting, then it's quite difficult to focus on something that's only going to yield results in two or three years' time, even if it is ultimately for the benefit of your charity. So it's perhaps the key there is about providing different outputs for different measures of success, partnerships that move just beyond income, perhaps, but at the moment, there's very few charities that do that [emphasis added].”

Charity interviewee 6

“Oh, absolutely. I mean, of course, they come from above. That's what I'm saying. That Potentially, there has to be a more nuanced way of measuring success and a more long-term way of measuring success, but it's going to be through having organizations feel like they're in a position to prioritize investing in those [new metrics].”

Charity interviewee 6

But as Charity Interviewee 4 reminded us, the short term mindset can also come from with the fundraising department; it's not just senior managers imposing short-term targets

There's also a level of inertia that overtakes partnerships teams and charities, who just get stuck in the treadmill of doing what they have always done because it is in their comfort zone:

“The trust is there for the short term partnerships because that's what they know. And they feel is almost a comfort zone. It's a way of working that they understand.”

Charity interviewee 3

“There are certain mindsets that hold people back in terms of the traditional structures and I think, that provides a massive barrier to these types of partnerships. And there is always the risk of this happening...while we've kind of got our plans in place for the year, and this is kind of what we're sticking to.”

Charity interviewee 9

This is a barrier that changing the language used to describe partnerships could perhaps help to overcome.

3.1.3 The short-term transactional anchor

This is what appears to be going on.

Corporate fundraisers/partnerships managers have aspirations¹ for longer-term/more strategic/more ambitious partnerships, but that those aspirations have short-term transactional anchors slung around them that keep dragging them back to hitting financial targets (transferred value), and so keep partnerships anchored at the Philanthropic/Transactional end of the Collaboration Continuum, rather than providing the freedom and investment to strive for a more ambitious partnerships that will create greater interactive and synergistic value (most likely through an Integrative partnership).

“And because so much of the emphasis is about money. And I understand that in the fundraising environment you have to be looking at generating income, obviously, but because it's so focused on short-term income, the risk is that you don't get involved in relationship development, which could lead to a better and more innovative, more creative partnership in due course, because actually, you've got to focus on generating that income now, so the relationship is likely to be much more, I can't think of the word, but much more sort of, or much less in-depth.”

Charity interviewee 1

In this respect, corporate fundraising is in the same boat as other types of relationship fundraising, as precisely these concerns were identified as barriers to relationship fundraising (MacQuillin 2016; MacQuillin and Rogare International Advisory Panel 2017).

Some charity sector interviewees expressed moving to more ambitious partnerships in term of an ethical imperative, as evidenced by the words “owe” and “obligation” in the following.

“I think that we owe it to the people that we ultimately accountable to, in our case children and families, we need to think long term and with multi-year partnerships and big pieces of work that we can make real change.”

Charity interviewee 3

“But I think that's where as corporate partnership professionals, you have an obligation to be negotiating partnerships, which do work on both [benefits for charity and company] levels, and actually work for, you know, in some way make the service stuff we're talking about in some way make their lives easier or enable them to do a project they weren't otherwise able to do, whether that's through financial support or through access to certain skills which they may not have.”

Charity interviewee 6

And so how do charities meet this obligation, cut the short-term transactional anchor from dragging down their aspirations for ambitious partnerships?

¹ See literature review (MacQuillin 2020, s3.2) or s6.1 of this paper for the distinction between ‘ambition’ and ‘aspiration’.

"I do hear a lot of about the need of getting away from charity and looking at more strategic partnerships, but then there's the actual doing any of that, and then the skills and knowledge to be able to do it."

Charity interviewee 9

One of these is having relevant knowledge and skills. Part of this is having knowledge of industry sectors and companies' CSR objectives. Another part is relationship building skills. But what of the knowledge needed to be able to build more ambitious partnerships. Do fundraisers possess a really detailed knowledge of their own professional practice and research and models that would allow them to re-envision more ambitious partnerships?

The consensus among charity sector interviewees was that they did not, and some admitted to not having this knowledge themselves.

"I would be very surprised if they did [have knowledge of models]. What I find surprising is that so many fundraisers don't engage in fundraising research knowledge and developing their own careers, in personal development opportunities. I see it routinely that fundraisers just go to it. They do the job and they go home. They're passionate, don't get me wrong, they're passionate and they believe in what they do and they love what they do, but they don't often take the time to invest in [professional] development outside of work."

Charity interviewee 1

"I think that often it could be they don't have the knowledge in terms of internally, what those transformational projects or pieces of work or relationships might look like, and how that might, you know, internally how they might project manage them."

Charity interviewee 3

Suggested solutions included a greater focus on professional development, including more training provision, specifically training that moved away from sharing case studies. (with the implication that these should be copied) to present more complex knowledge, such as partnership models that go beyond transactional partnerships, and training that looked at theories of corporate philanthropy and CSR.

But it is important to caveat all this by saying that interviewees are generalising. As Charity Interviewee 6 said:

"I'm sure there are a number of fantastic corporate professionals out there that have incredibly detailed knowledge about different sectors. I think the good ones do [have enough understanding of what companies want and understanding of the various models that could help them create that to be able to put those in place] and the charities that will continue to have success in winning corporate partnerships will develop their staff to be able to understand."

But even if partnership managers at charities have all the requisite knowledge in every domain, that still may not be enough to cut loose the transactional anchor if their management does not buy into their ambition. That knotty issue is tackled in s4.

3.2 Corporate sector knowledge

A similar picture emerges about the knowledge of CSR and partnership managers at companies. Their knowledge is variable, with many considered not to have knowledge of the formal models that would help them meet their objectives.

"In the 20 years I've dealt with commercial companies wearing the hat of a charity trustee, I've not really seen effective models produced in conversations with them."

Company interviewee 1

"I think it's more instinctive. I didn't realize there were well, I've never really researched it, that there were academic models about how to do it. That's really interesting. Actually, I must look that up. I have never heard anyone that does my role and a different business talking about that sort of process."

Company interviewee 5

"I'm not necessarily convinced that people have the right understanding of how you can be ambitious with partnerships. And that the reason why I'm saying that is actually, all CSR activities, at least in my experience, have a budget that sits behind it, but that budget has to really come out and achieve some very specific aspects."

Company interviewee 3

At least two possible explanations emerged from the interviews with company interviewees. The first is that partnerships with charities are seen as peripheral to a company's marketing approach, and indeed to meeting their whole business objectives. In fact, it could even detract from their core function of making a profit, a concern that was described in the literature review (MacQuillin 2020, s5.7).

"It will be through a very, I would suggest fairly narrow marketing prism, and it will be much more of an add-on than central to their marketing philosophy - 'yeah, we need to do some we need to have a charity; we'll tack that on the end. Let's find a charity to do something with and we'll come up with a number of things'."

Company interviewee 2

"I think in a lot of cases, it's just an add-on. But I do think that's changing. I don't think it's as awful as it was, say five years ago. And I do think it's much more strategic and people and organizations are thinking about it and a wider context. So I think that like the future's bright for that kind of thing."

Company interviewee 5

"I think it varies massively. Yeah, so some of them are probably not even considering that the charity partnerships could support business objectives. So I'm thinking like, well, aside from like brand objectives I guess and colleague engagement, but in terms of achieving their societal business objectives [and] ... trying to help them achieve their purpose as an organization... Yeah, I think most organization are probably not looking at that."

Company interviewee 4

"I think there are some attitudes within corporates about the, the involvement of employees in the process, which is depending on depending on the type of organization, it could be seen as interruptive to the core activity of the organization."

Company interviewee 6

"The risk will I think be about focus and your team focus your staff focus might be a really good thing. But you know you're in, you're in business to make money. And if you start suddenly sort of spend most of their time or all of the time, all a good chunk of their time working on this charity partnership, you can see how their focus on their day job, as we'll be seen, is somewhat lost."

Company interviewee 2

Partnerships with charities being seen as peripheral to a company's own CSR, much less contributing to its business objectives, is the corporate sector's version of charities' short-term transactional anchor; like many charities, companies are stuck in their comfort zone of transferring value to charities through unambitious transactional partnerships.

"So it's like, you know, 'can we get enough people within our business to raise some money for this cause' is usually the trigger when it comes to selecting a charity partner, you know, is it going to appeal to everybody, so they're kind of quite one dimensional in the thinking, which I think can be a bit of a blocker to ambitious charity partnerships."

Company interviewee 7

"I see a lot of companies who are doing very tactical, non-strategic charity partnerships, often, and that sounds awful. There are a lot of companies that are now pushing the boundaries, and are looking at strategic partnerships, but I would say I think it's mixed. A lot of them are still stuck under charity of the year. First and foremost. Yes. brand and reputation. Societal impact is nice, but it's not strategically aligned with [what] the company's trying to achieve at all."

Company interviewee 4

"I think some companies just haven't got the time and inclination to invest a little bit of their own resourcing into finding experts to help them. So they do the obvious thing, which is support charity of the year rather than looking at something that might make a bigger difference if they hadn't sustainable partnership over a number of years."

Company interviewee 1

Like charities, companies appear to be talking a strategic partnerships game, but are playing tactically when they get on the pitch. This highlights a possible dissonance regarding the language that company interviewees spoke about the reasons that companies embarked on partnerships with charities, which were couched around achieving societal outcomes (see s2).

The second possible reason for why charity partnerships are seen as peripheral to a company's CSR may actually be a symptom of this peripherality – it's not easy discerning which way the causal arrow goes. The majority of company interviewees spoke of how people were hired into CSR roles with no prior experience, or fell into it by default, which

makes it very similar to fundraising, where many fundraisers claim they have fallen into the role 'by accident' without any prior knowledge of how to perform their role (MacQuillin 2017, and forthcoming). So is it the lack of knowledge of partnership managers/CSR professionals that causes the peripherality of CCPs, or are inexperienced practitioners hired because CCPs are peripheral?

"So there is a bit of a challenge in that maybe companies are not necessarily recruiting the people who are best experienced to work with charities, who have an understanding of...[the] opportunities to work with charities, but then also, at least with some of the organisations that I'm aware of, it's people who were perhaps working in HR who expressed an interest kind of like running the community programme and they become the community manager."

Company interviewee 3

"I don't want to generalize but often when I see that is because they've hired people in those roles that have zero experience in that field...especially, I would say outside of London, where companies are probably less mature or it may be the first time that it's at the CSR team or whatever they want to call it. And they often hire someone internal who had no experience whatsoever in this area."

Company interviewee 4

"Sometimes it's an individual that is doing the job as a transition as a stepping stone from one job into another, and they happen to have an interest in it so aren't particularly skilled, but they do have lots of positive values about working with charities."

Company interviewee 1

"Many, many people get into corporate-charity partnerships by default."

Company interviewee 7

Further to the comments above, which represent consensus among company sector interviewees, our interviewee described a lack of educational opportunities and formal qualifications available to CSR professionals to help bridge the gap in their knowledge/experience. We have not further researched this claim as part of this project. However, a very quick online search for "CSR qualification" did not bring up many obvious results (there are some master's degrees, such as the one at Birkbeck College,² and the search also threw up plenty of training course, which are not the same thing as educational course); while a careers advice page offering tips about how to get into CSR on Manchester University's website³ suggests things such as interning to gain experience, but does not recommend an entry-level qualification, which if representative of the CSR sector puts it in very much in line with the type of advice regularly give about how to get into fundraising (MacQuillin, forthcoming).

² <https://www.mastersportal.com/studies/76039/corporate-responsibility-and-sustainability.html> - accessed 30 May 2020.

³ <https://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/whichcareer/management/csr/> - accessed 30 May 2020.

However, irrespective of the current state of CSR training/education, it could still be possible that new training/educational programmes are required that focus specifically on charity-corporate partnerships, for both company and charity professionals.

3.3 Knowledge of management and leadership

The two previous subsections explore the knowledge of partnerships managers at charities and companies. However, there are others whose knowledge is key to the implementation and subsequent success of ambitious CCPs – senior management, board, and colleagues. In other words, the rest of the respective organisations.

The consensus on both sides was that this knowledge and understanding was lacking, and this lack represented a major barrier in securing internal buy-in for more ambitious partnerships (see s4). As we have already seen in s3.2, partnerships are often considered an add-on or peripheral to CSR and business objectives.

We can add into the mix senior managers' desires to do something that contributes to 'social outcomes'. However, these 'social outcomes' may be rather simple and unambitious Transactional or even Philanthropic partnerships, rather than Integrative partnerships that would deliver change at a societal level by creating *interactive* and *synergistic* value. There is also the sense that corporate responsibility is expected of them, so a partnership is an easy win. And there might even be more selfish reasons in that they see working with charities as way to fulfil their own personal aspirations, an issue that was highlighted in the literature review (MacQuillin 2020, s5.7). These factors all add weight to the company version of the short-term transactional anchor, dragging partnership formation back to the Philanthropic/Transactional end of the Collaboration Continuum.

"I think I'd like to say most big businesses recognize the importance of working with charities. That tension comes from the fact that companies think, you know, sometimes think that working with a charity means like, small investment, small financial investments with big outcomes, and that's potentially so not so much a reticence or you're not willing to engage with charities but actually just a lack of understanding of how you could get the best out of that relationship."

Company interviewee 3

"Well, I think there are plenty of outcomes that they [companies] should hope that charities deliver for them. But I'm not necessarily convinced that the leadership team of organisations that have charity partnerships has never necessarily given them a lot of thought. I think maybe the people who arrange the charity partnerships have, but the further up the leadership stack, I'm not convinced they necessarily reach that level, yet."

Company interviewee 6

"There are lots of business leaders out there and who would like to do things but they're not quite sure how they should tackle this issue. So you get lots of new managing directors new chief executives, new partners of major companies being appointed. And all of them

want to do something positive because they see that as part of reflecting their rounded leadership.

Company interviewee 1

"I think you're trying to sell something to people that maybe have come from a different...maybe come from a more transactional background, you know, because they're maybe a bit longer in their careers and have been through this sort of charity partnership idea and that's kind of the best thing that they've ever seen. So they want to do that."

Company interviewee 5

"I know that there are people who are trying to get CBEs, MBEs, knighthoods, etc. And depending on what they do with the community might swing either way, so that might impact them."

Company interviewee 5

Charity sector leadership and management shows a similar lack of knowledge and understanding of partnerships.

"I think generally boards and senior management's often don't have an understanding of benefits outside of financial return. So there's this drive that I'm sure everybody from the charity sector will tell you: Short-term targets were in bring us the money now. Never minds about long term. We want money in year and all we want to be guaranteed of money in coming years, so I think a fundraiser would have to act very hard to come to evidence to a board or senior management, what those other measurables are. And because they can sometimes be harder to measure, and I would imagine that they would be sidelined in favour of a financial benefits."

Charity interviewee 1

"I think a lack of understanding from, as we said before board members or senior leaders within the charity, and a lack of understanding of how we work as fundraisers, and that could go both ways actually, that could be being restricting to the type of partnerships that we want to create."

Charity interviewee 3

There is even a lack of understanding of corporate fundraising within fundraising departments.

"I think most fundraising directors don't understand corporate fundraising. So in their mind, there is one thing and in the corporate fundraiser's mind, there's something else. And quite often the two are so dissimilar that there is there is a disconnect, even within fundraising teams. Most fundraising director's don't have a major donor background and there's very few that are corporate fundraising background. So if there is that genuine lack of understanding and genuine appreciation of the nuance within corporate fundraising, it's very difficult to explain an advocate particularly in the larger charities."

Charity interviewee 4.

3.4 Summary and analysis

The main insights into barriers we can draw from this section is that for both charities and companies there are factors that keep their partnerships 'anchored' at the Philanthropic/Transactional end of the Collaboration Continuum. These factors include lack of knowledge and understanding of partnerships knowledge at both charities and companies, and a lack of understanding about partnerships among company and charity leadership and management. This supports the finding of the literature review that identified such a lack of knowledge and a significant possible barrier.

The solution, and quite an obvious one, to the lack of knowledge is to provide better knowledge through training and education that focuses specifically on charity-corporate partnerships - rather than general courses on corporate fundraising or CSR.

4. Organisational support for ambitious partnerships

The second major barrier to ambitious CCPs that emerges from this research is lack of support and buy-in from an organisation's (company or charity) leadership and management, which can often be the "default" position.

However, both charity and company interviewees stressed that this was a mixed picture and some said that some attitudes – for example, that working with companies was like 'sleeping with the enemy' (as highlighted in the literature review, s5.2) or that charities were simply not professional enough (also in the literature review, s10) – were anachronistic, changing, or had simply not encountered them.

Nonetheless, there were some important insights from the research that indicated there are some negative attitudes that are alive and well and lead to lack of support for partnerships, whether or not people are justified in holding those negative attitudes.

4.1 Underpinning negative attitudes and perceptions

The previous section (s3.3) described how a lack of understanding of partnership processes and objectives contributes to lack of support: partnerships are seen as peripheral to main organisational objectives, and/or they are perceived only as a source of unambitious transferred resource value, whether that is receiving the transferred value (NPOs) or giving it (companies).⁴ This is one of the factors that anchors partnerships to the Philanthropic/Transactional end of the CC.

The literature review (MacQuillin 2020) highlighted many other potential factors that could form barriers to ambitious partnerships, and which would amalgamate to contribute to lack of internal buy-in. On the charity side these were:

- Negative attitudes among charities to working with company partners/antipathy to working with corporates (s5.2 of the literature review)
- Ideas that companies have a duty to give (s5.3)
- Power imbalances in CCPs with companies holding too much power and calling the shots (s5.4).

And from companies' perspective:

- A distrust of the skills and qualities of NPOs to deliver partnership objectives (s5.1)
- Companies' expectations will not be met by the partnership and/or it won't receive due recognition (s5,10b).

This research sought interviewees' views on these factors via specific questions about whether and what negative attitudes had been encountered, attitudes that might act as a

⁴ *Of course, companies do receive transferred (and associational) value from their CCPs, but this was not cited as a major reason for doing partnerships by participants in this research.*

barrier to ambitious partnerships; as well as what perceived risks might prevent organisations from embarking on such partnerships. So it is important to remember that these are not the risks of and negative attitudes about having partnerships *per se*, but about more ambitious partnerships.

This research confirmed that there were several potential risks and attitudes that acted as barriers to ambitious partnerships (over and over barriers to partnerships *per se*) and that these factors contribute to an attitude among leadership and management that indicates a lack of buy-in or support for ambitious CCPs.

Risks from the charity side (i.e. the risks of partnering with a company on an ambitious partnership), included

Investment/resource - ambitious partnerships require more time, money, staff hours and other resources invested in them to ensure success.

Failure - the partnership doesn't achieve its ambitious objectives.

Reputational - a perennial issue for charities embarking on partnerships with companies is the reputational risk because of companies' poor public perception of their (alleged) poor behaviour, along with the idea that there are always certain types of company (or certain companies) a charity would never partner with.

Company interviewees perceived similar risks in terms of **investment of resources** and potential partnership **failure** (not meeting its objectives), particularly if they had been engaged in previous partnerships that had not worked out: failure of a less ambitious partnership was not going to encourage them to engage in a more ambitious partnership in the future.

Company interviewees also highlighted some other risks/negative attitudes:

Lack of professionalism of charities -

"There's quite certainly at board level, I think there's a bit of a derogatory like, oh, like, I don't know, if you can't make a business go and work in charities and stuff like that, which is absolutely ridiculous because they work harder than most of us. They definitely work harder than most of us."

Company interviewee 5

Poor communication by charities -

"I think there are some barriers that hold corporates against working with charities and that is that they feel that in giving amounts of money, they don't own the feedback on impact that they can just share with their board."

Company interviewee 1

"And I think one of the key takes out from that was we weren't good at the feedback loop, neither us nor the charity. And we felt sometimes a charity didn't put enough effort into

getting us the publicity we wanted, and there that was not getting the people that they were supporting, to get it get to come to our events to engage in the PR."

Company interviewee 2

Corporate sector interviewees also highlighted **reputation** as a serious potential barrier; the bad public image/reputation/behaviour of a charity was a serious barrier to partnering with them, spurred by recent issues as disquiet over fundraising methods or safeguarding.

"Given some of the major International stories about how some charities have been less good at looking after the clients that they focus on. There is no doubt that corporates needs to take care in their decision making on who they partner with. And so they'll need assurances that for example, if a charity is dealing with children, that people engaging with those children have gone through the correct procedures."

Company interviewee 1

"I don't think some of the bad press the charities have gotten in recent years has necessarily helped either, you know. So if you're sitting in a boardroom and someone asks you for £100,000 or whatever it is for a project, and your charity, you know, are you viewed like an Oxfam?"

Company interviewee 5

"We would look at charities that have been involved in controversies...around management of funds of how they fundraise, which has been quite profound."

Company interviewee 4

It may seem like a kind or perverse role reversal that companies are concerned that partnering with the wrong charity will damage their reputation, but it was something that was mentioned by one of the charity interviewees.

"The concerns from a corporate point of view, and they're seeing that negativity around these forms of fundraising and these forms of income generation that they may not necessarily want to be associated with that general kind of area of income generation and fundraising per se."

Charity interviewee 7

So the lack of knowledge about and understanding of partnerships among leadership and management, coupled with various negative attitudes, some of which may or may not be justified and some of which may be ingrained or a default attitude, come together as a lack of internal buy-in or support for ambitious partnerships. This is a massive barrier, because the majority of our research participants identified organisational support as key to the success of such partnerships.

"It definitely needs to be top down. I mean, there's really no point and a junior fundraiser, going out and trying to develop a corporate partnership programme without having that buy-in across the organization in terms of actually seeing what the need is in the organization."

Charity interviewee 7

"I think the biggest drawback from building this type of transformative approach is frankly, you know, lack of, of leadership engagement within the company. You know, if the board themselves aren't on board into this, there's very little I think that the CSR team can, can do to deliver such a partnership, because it involves so much more of the business."

Charity interviewee 5 (who is here talking about the need for leadership support at companies.

"And past experiences, good bad for both sides, getting fingers burnt, internal buy in from the partner. Hugely important. You can have a really ambitious contact. But if there is not that buy in from the top, it's so hard. It's not going to go anywhere. It's like you're wading through mud."

Charity interviewee 8

"If we can get our senior leaders, our board members and as a sector, and we can share practice, and we can communicate together with corporates, I think that we stand a good chance of seeing more and more ambitious partnerships."

Charity interviewee 3

As previously stated the lack of buy-in can also come from the top of the fundraising department:

"The lack of ambition does come from the top. And I think there is this sense with fundraising directors particularly of 'I'll get what I can get'."

Charity interviewee 4

"So you need to have someone somewhere, whether it's their CSR manager or whatever they're called, or whether it's a CEO who thinks, okay, we will not go with the charity partnership model where it's a charity every year."

Company interviewee 4

"It's more along the lines of is everybody going buy into it if we're going to make this massive commitment. Is everybody on board across the business...And the way to do it would be to get that leadership team or that executive team to try and buy into that and then push that up and get the board to approve it."

Company interviewee 5.

We have now identified lack of organisational buy-in as a huge barrier to more ambitious partnerships, and the reasons why this barrier exists. So what can be done about it.

4.2 Securing organisational support – creating a sense of collective ambition

In seeking to engage an organisation's leadership and management in building ambitious corporate partnerships, we need to create a culture of 'collective ambition' to create more value.

Collective ambition is a concept described in an article in the *Harvard Business Review* by US organisational management theory scholars Douglas A. Ready and Emily Truelove (2011) and outlined in detail in the literature review to this project (MacQuillin 2020, s3).

Collective ambition is (Ready and Truelove 2011, p97):

"A shared sense of purpose, how a company will fulfil it and track progress and how leaders and others will behave every day as they achieve and sustain excellence."

Partnerships professionals at charities and companies need to engage their organisations in such a shared ambition, which, as described in the literature review, is to create more value from partnerships, but not necessarily to put in place a particular type of partnership for the sake of having that type of partnership.

Another way to look at this problem is to think about how we can engage leaders and management in such a way as to persuade them (or perhaps inspire them) to cut loose the short-term, transactional anchors that are weighing them down.

Partnership professionals first need to have the best knowledge about partnerships at their fingertips. Our company interviewees spoke about the need to be able to show how CSR objectives fit with a company's business objectives, a challenge that was highlighted in the literature review (MacQuillin 2020, s5.7).

Then the key point in the engagement is to move the discussion to talk about social purpose and to use this as device to move them of from transactional stuff.

"So I think if you start talking about like cake bakes, and marathon running your board and your senior management switch off, if you start saying, Okay, so this partnership could these, this is the business purpose, these are the benefits as a business, that we would get to partner with this organisation."

"I think that's when you start to get their attention and turn their head. You know, that's what it was like for me at the CSR group. As soon as I spoke about social purpose rather than charity. That's where they were like, oh, okay, because they just want to see what is the what's in it for them, right."

Company interviewee 7

"I would encourage the corporate partnerships professional to bring the leadership team of the organization right back to its purpose. I mean, its real purpose, the purpose that it's that its customers employees care about."

Company interviewee 6

The above quote from Company Interviewee 7 says that the board is 'turned off' by talk about transactional items such as cake bakes. This seems to counter the idea that there is a short-term transactional anchor. It may however simply be the mismatch of language and aspiration discussed in s2. It has come through strongly in this research that SMTs are quick to fall into their transactional comfort zone. So it could be that they 'turn off' at the talk of cake bakes, but still do those things, because they are not being sufficiently well engaged (inspired) by ideas to create much, much more societal value.

The second key point in moving the discussion forward is to persuade senior management that partnerships are not peripheral to or a diversion from their core purpose but are actually core themselves. Until CSR managers can present partnerships as "productivity gained rather than productivity lost", according to Company Interviewee 6, and...

"...until we can really communicate that fundamental difference to the leaders who don't yet understand it, then I think we are still going to have some real barriers to truly ambitious partnerships."

Charity interviewees spoke about the need to create a 'culture' that promoted partnerships. Creating a 'culture of philanthropy' - engaging the whole organisation in fundraising - is often touted a solution to many of fundraisings problems and challenges (for example, Joyaux 2011 or search "culture of philanthropy" online). It has been identified as a solution to break down the barriers that inhibit long-term investment donorcentred, relationship fundraising (MacQuillin and Rogare Advisory Panel 2017). A culture of philanthropy is essentially another way to express the NPO's collective ambition.

"Everyone across the organization should be a partnerships person. And we need our leadership team, to be thinking about the big ideas to be encouraging their teams, their programmatic and advocacy teams, to be thinking about ideas ...You really need to have 100 percent buy in from your programme colleagues, because one, it's going to be programmes that they're already invested in and supporting and running that will be at the heart of these approaches."

Charity interviewee 2

"Now, what springs to mind is about innovation. I think that culture is so important. The whole organization, because so often the organisation has to get behind a partnership. To deliver any ambition, the entire organization has to be behind that ambition."

Charity interviewee 8

"Part of our job is to make sure that we're creating a fundraising culture within the charity so that everybody understands and the value of our not just our corporate supporters, but every single supporter that we have...[and] really making everybody part of the fundraising team."

Charity interviewee 3

Not only does creating and fostering a sense of collective ambition (or a culture of partnerships) at an organisation require a great deal of relevant knowledge, it also requires excellent relationship building and storytelling skills. Not only do partnerships managers at charities need to be good at building relationships with their counterparts at companies, they need to be equally good at building relationships internally. And the same goes for CSR practitioners. Building relationships with all stakeholders, including internal stakeholders, and not just customers, is a concept that has been termed 'Total Relationship Marketing' by Swedish Marketing academic Evert Gummesson (Gummesson 1999), and total relationship marketing ideas have been proposed as a way to secure internal buy-in for relationships fundraising (MacQuillin 2016).

And something that would also help, although it is not touched upon at all by the participants to this study, is knowledge and experience of internal communications methods, techniques and processes, and the processes of total relationship marketing. This is something that could be added to the required skillset of those recruited into the support network of partnerships teams (the first function of Charity Interviewee 5's tripartite division of the work of partnerships teams - see s3.1.2)

And so the first step in breaking through the barrier of lack of internal support for partnerships is to break through the first barrier we described, which is the lack of knowledge of (some) partnership professionals.

"The pushback [against partnerships] is something that is almost a default position. By having positive experiences with a corporate partner, whether that's volunteers or whether that's stuff outside of fundraising, I think can start to erode that and start to sort of make people understand the genuine value that corporate partnerships provide."

Charity interviewee 6.

But probably the biggest change required to create and foster this sense of collective ambition is for partnerships professional to change their own mindsets about partnerships, and for this we need to revisit the concept of 'ambition' and 'aspiration' as discussed in the literature review (MacQuillin 2020, s3.2).

'Ambition' is an habitual striving for success and, as we defined ambitious CCPs:

Ambition in charity-corporate partnerships (CCPs) is a desire to create more value than is currently being created in, by or through existing partnerships.

'Aspiration' by contrast is a desire for a particular outcome.

Organisations often have an 'aspiration' for a particular type of partnership - perhaps because they have seen other, bigger, organisations have such a partnership and feel they ought to emulate it. This views the partnership type as the objective in itself. But this makes it vulnerable to the negative attitudes around risk that add weight to the short-term, transactional anchor.

Instead, the conversation needs to be changed to one of an ambition to create more value than is currently being created. This is how we entered this phase of this project, by defining ambitious CCPs as those that:

“Create more value than is currently being created in, by or through existing partnerships.”

Viewing ambition in CCPs this way means it is not dependent on either the type of the partnership nor the size of the organisation, nor (necessarily) the resources that are available to invest in it. What is important is that both partners want to create more value than they currently do, and have the knowledge to successfully deliver on such an ambition.

Ambition therefore becomes a mindset that any charity can enter into:

“Transformative⁵ partnerships shouldn't be defined by scale...It's more, I think, a mindset from the charity's perspective and the company as to what they want to achieve...Of course, there will be challenges around resourcing capacity, but if the desire is there, on both sides, I do believe that, you know, that can be overcome.”

Charity interviewee 5.

4.3 Summary

As well as the lack of knowledge and understanding that leadership and management of both charities and companies have about partnerships (see s3.2), they also subscribe to several ingrained negative attitudes and perceptions both about partnership working and each other. Partnerships professionals need to change these narrative to create a sense of 'collective ambition' to create more value through partnerships. This will require knowledge of partnerships (what they are and what they can achieve) and the challenges faced by the focal partner. It will also require excellent story-telling and relationship building skills.

⁵ 'Transformative' does of course refer to a type of partnership rather than the value that is created through the partnership, but most value is created at the Integrative/Transformational end of the Collaboration Continuum, so it is permissible to read 'Transformative' as 'ambitious' in this context.

5. Other issues and barriers

The main narrative that arises from this research is as described in ss3 and 4 - that a lack of knowledge and understanding of partnerships among both practitioners and leadership/management, in both charities and companies, keeps partnerships anchored within a short-term transactional comfort zone focused on transferring value (mainly in a unilateral direction from company to charity).

And among leadership/management, this short-term transactional anchor is reinforced and exacerbated by a series of negative perceptions and attitudes about partnerships (such as they require too much investment to be successful) and about the partner organisation (such that they are a reputational risk). Other challenges, risks and issues emerge from this research that, while informed and influenced by the main narrative, can also be considered discretely. This chapter outlines those issues.

5.1 Organisation size

This size of organisations was identified as a potential barrier in the literature review (MacQuillin 2020, s10). This could be manifested in a sense that smaller organisations had fewer or insufficient resources to invest in a partnerships, that because of this, Integrative and Transformational partnerships are the preserve of bigger organisations with more resources, and that anyway, smaller NPOs have a more pressing need for immediate financial benefit.

This interview phase did not ask specifically about size of organisation as a potential barrier, but some questions referred to it indirectly (by asking whether some charities might have thought Integrative partnerships were 'not for us', for example).

There was some sense that bigger companies were at an advantage in implementing more ambitious partnerships, because they had more resources to invest and had more a higher brand image, which was attractive to bigger charities; and that smaller companies were concomitantly disadvantaged, and also because they may have less marketing/CSR/partnerships knowledge.

Similarly with charities, ambition in partnerships could be relative to the organisation's size, and smaller charities would therefore have to be less ambitious than bigger charities. One interviewee also reported the sense in the charity sector that NPOs often look at the really big case studies, such as that between Marks and Spencer and Oxfam, as exemplars. The unintended consequence of this is that many charities think that if they do not have the resources to be able to achieve something on this scale, then partnerships are simply not worth doing.

However, making ambition relative to size is to conflate ambition with aspiration. In the literature review we described the difference between ambition and aspiration (MacQuillin 2020, s3.2).

When the terms 'big' and 'small' refer just to the size of the partnership, they become limiting factors that act as barriers to ambitious partnerships because smaller organisations simply cannot achieve an aspiration for a 'big' partnership. If the words 'big' and 'small' instead refer to the value created, some of that barrier begins to be dismantled because the discussion about partnerships is refocussed on creating value, not building a particular type of partnership.

A small charity and a small company cannot have a 'big' Integrative partnership in the sense that it is big in the way Oxfam and Marks and Spencer would make it big. But they can have a small Integrative partnership that creates more value, for both partners and for society (which would necessarily be conceived of more narrowly around the charity's mission) than they could achieve through a 'small' Transactional partnership.

As we saw in s4.2, Charity Interviewee 5 said that ambitious partnerships should not be defined by scale, and their quote is repeated below:

"Transformative partnerships shouldn't be defined by scale...It's more, I think, a mindset from the charity's perspective and the company as to what they want to achieve...Of course, there will be challenges around resourcing capacity, but if the desire is there, on both sides, I do believe that, you know, that can be overcome."

Charity interviewee 5.

Entering this mindset might even allow smaller charities to steal a march on their larger counterparts as corporate fundraising and CSR rebuilds following the Coronavirus pandemic (s2.3 s7.2).

5.2 Metrics and measurements

Partnerships at the Integrative/Transformational end of the Collaboration Continuum have bigger, more ambitious objectives. But the type of value (*interactive* and *synergistic*) and outcomes they aim to create are much harder to measure - i.e. impact reporting - than KPIs at the Philanthropic/Transactional end of the CC (it's much easier to measure success against a financial or sales target).

The importance in measuring social outcomes was discussed by our company interviewees.

"A fundamental barrier to more ambitious partnerships is working out how you measure the impact that that ambitious partnership has on the organisation."

Company interviewee 6

"The biggest thing that we companies want to be able to report and feedback is impact. And by this I mean impact figures. The kind of thing that companies really want to report on is the specific impact and being able to personalise that impact and bring it down to either one person or into communities."

Company interviewee 3

“What's important is that they can see where the money goes. They can say the difference they've had on that charity. Yeah, I think that's really, really important, impact measurement and all that kind of stuff.”

Company interviewee 7

But there were problems. First, they said charities were often not very good at reporting to companies, or that the reporting they did get was often about the use to which transferred value (usually money) had been put, but not necessarily the outcomes this had achieved. And we have already seen in se 5.1 that company interviewees had identified previous poor relationships with/communication from charities as a barrier to future ambitious partnerships.

Charity interviewees recognised the importance of doing just that, and that some were reporting differently.

“I think there are some barriers that hold corporates against working with charities and that is that they feel that in giving amounts of money, they don't own the feedback on impact that they can just share with their board. And so they're beginning to become wiser at looking for impacts of how funds are used. But as we both know, that just looking at how funds are used, is not the only benefit that a company can achieve from a partnership.”

Charity interviewee 1

“I think companies are well within their right to ensure that charities do jump through hoops about how money is going to be spent and the transparency of it all.”

Charity interviewee 9

“Every year we have an impact report that we send to people, a sort of an end of year review, and we have a meeting with them. And we quantify the impact in terms of reach and impact on individuals, things like quotes and stories and things like that. And I think that is something that we need to share right across the charity for corporate partnership shooting those successes and those impacts and of what the court plates are bringing to the charity.”

Charity interviewee 3

Charities therefore agree with companies on the need for social impact report. But there is a familiar barrier standing in the way of their wholeheartedly committing to this: short-term transactional targets and measurements.

This quote has been used previous in s3.1.2 but it bears repeating:

“If you're, if you're a head of or whatever, whatever it might be in your and you have very clear stringent targets to be hitting, then it's quite difficult to focus on something that's only going to yield results in two or three years' time, even if it is ultimately for the benefit of your charity. So it's perhaps the key there is about providing different outputs for different measures of success, partnerships that move just beyond income, perhaps, but at the moment, there's very few charities that do that [emphasis added].”

“Oh, absolutely. I mean, of course, they [targets] come from above. That's what I'm saying. That potentially, there has to be a more nuanced way of measuring success and a more long-term way of measuring success, but it's going to be through having organizations feel like they're in a position to prioritize investing in those [new metrics].”

Charity interviewee 6

There is an opportunity for charities to improve their impact reporting around partnerships and perhaps even work with companies to co-create the metrics they need to measure the value they create through ambitious partnership, metrics that can be founded upon different types of value created, although what these metrics might be is beyond the scope of this project.

Once developed, these new measurements would be tools that could then be used to help overcome an important barrier - that companies have no way of knowing how much good their investment in a charity partnerships is achieving, and so satisfy one of the main reasons company interviews gave for embarking on CCPs, which was to achieve societal outcomes (s2.2).

To do that brings us back to the main narrative of this research. Partnerships managers first need the knowledge of why companies seeks these objectives, then the knowledge of how to devise appropriate metrics, and the relationship building and communications skills and knowledge to secure organisational buy-in for them.

5.3 Power imbalance

The literature review (MacQuillin 2020, s5.4) outlined a phenomenon that has been well-described in the academic literature, namely that there is often an asymmetry in value creation with CCPs, with the corporate partner standing to gain proportionately more; and/or there is a power imbalance in the partnership, with the corporate partner wielding greater power and being able to call the shots (because the company has what the charity wants), perhaps to the disadvantage of the NPO. The literature review contains a cautionary tale of the Israeli nonprofit Yad Sarah, which suffered such a value creation asymmetry/power imbalance (ibid pp36-37).

The majority (seven of nine) of charity interviewees spoke about this situation and there's little to be gained by including some of the quotes that demonstrate this, though here is just one example:

“There is a bit of that in terms of some companies, wanting to dictate how services are delivered or what services are delivered. And, you know, wanting to be seen to be supporting a new programme or a new project. And it can sometimes be perceived that corporates are just basically demanding that you create a new programme to make them seem to be looking good, when in fact, there is a massive need already in existing services that hasn't been fulfilled by those partnerships, because you've been forced in the direction of creating something new and sexy for the company.”

Charity interviewee 7

And so it is undoubtedly a potential barrier to more ambitious partnerships, because the value a company wants to create can be done at a lower level in the Collaboration Continuum. So we have a different type of anchor dragging partnerships back to the Philanthropic/Transactional end. This anchor isn't so much because there is a short-term need (for money) that takes priority, or that there is a comfort zone in that this is what people are used to doing with the resources they have. Rather this anchors partnerships at the lower end of a scale of ambitious value creation because companies simply don't need to go any higher.

A discussion of power imbalance is included in this report because, once again, it highlights how the report's central narrative is key to resolving this tensions.

Charity partnerships managers first need to be aware that this possible situation exists and understand the context for it, which requires having requisite knowledge. But the main thing in overcoming this will be about having excellent storytelling and relationship building skills to be able to take inspire their corporate partners to take a different journey to ambitious value creation through partnerships (which again requires knowledge of the type of value that can be created.

"[It's about having] the confidence to be able to mould the relationship into what you need it to be not just what the corporate wants it to be. So it's about that conversation at the start of this is what we want. So everybody, cards on the table, what would you like from this partnership?"

Charity interviewee 8.

5.4 Role of corporate 'fundraisers'

This report has often used the term 'partnerships managers at charities', or it has used a different term, 'corporate fundraisers/partnership managers'.

This is because there is not necessarily consensus on the role of what a corporate fundraiser should be in terms of partnerships management.

The generally accepted name for the discipline in which partnerships management sits in a fundraising department is 'corporate fundraising'. So according to this schema, all partnerships managers will also be 'corporate fundraisers'. However, not all corporate fundraisers will necessarily consider themselves to be 'partnership managers', perhaps because they don't consider this to be part of their role (because it's the role of someone else in the corporate fundraising department); or because they see their role primarily as securing money through Philanthropic and Transactional partnerships, so they literally are raising funds and funds only.

This project suggests that the role of 'corporate fundraising' may need to be redefined, even though actually doing so is beyond the scope of the literature review of the qualitative research. However, this paper presents some of the relevant arguments made by interviewees.

First, Charity Interviewee 4 argued that the term 'fundraiser' was itself limiting ambition in partnerships because it implied the role was to secure the transferred resource value (i.e. money) that is most easily obtained through short term Philanthropic and Transactional Partnerships. The term itself is an anchor that restricts the imagination of what can be achieved through partnerships to things such as employee fundraising and CotY. Charity Interviewee 4 is quoted at length below:

"We don't mean corporate partnerships, what we mean is corporate fundraising. I'm here to ask you for money, you're here to give me money. We're just going to do it using these mechanisms [such as employee fundraising and CotY]. Very few corporate partnerships and employees within charities are looking at partnerships.

"But while corporate partnerships are still seen within a fundraising lens, they will never achieve what they need to. Many strategic corporate partnerships should sit outside fundraising and should be led by normally the chief executive's office, or a strategic engagement team, who should be looking at these opportunities and fundraising should play a role in that.

"I think it comes back to a misunderstanding about what corporate fundraising actually is. On the whole people assume that corporate partnerships and corporate fundraising are one in the same. And we've just stuck the word strategic in it, because it sounds better. Yet we don't actually see much strategic corporate partnership work across the sector.

"And the reality is the corporate partnerships employees that charities have got do not have the skills capability or dare I say ambition to do so."

Charity Interviewee 4's argument encapsulates the central narrative of this research - lack of knowledge about partnerships and the value they can generate acts to anchor partnerships at the Philanthropic/Transactional end of the CC. Partnerships must be viewed and understood - and owned - by the whole organisation ("sit outside fundraising"), which will never be achieved unless and until NPOs develop a collective ambition to create the most value from their partnerships with the corporate sector.

Charity Interviewee 4 elaborates on the need to move partnerships out of the fundraising department:

"If we want true partners, it has to sit above and beyond fundraising and fundraising should be an element of it. [But] if it's going to be led by fundraising, you're going to have a fundraising lens skew the relationships. Everything is going to come back to money.

"Because corporate partnerships reports to the director of fundraising, whose job is to bring in the money, and as much as a fundraising director would love to see strategic corporate partnerships that are delivering on charitable activity for their director of operations or director of welfare or whatever, that's not what they're targeted on."

Removing partnerships from the fundraising department entirely might be seen as step too far for many. But Charity Interviewee 4 has shown us the types of questions and the

types of discussions that we need to be critically reflecting on as we think about the role of 'fundraisers' in developing, stewarding and leading partnerships with companies.

Another discussion point concerning the role of fundraisers/partnership managers was articulated by Company Interviewee 7, who argued that it would be the charity side that would need to lead and drive the move towards greater ambition in CCPs.

First, this argument is made because many CSR managers lack sufficient knowledge, and so charity partnership managers/fundraisers will need to compensate for that by driving the partnership. This, however, begs the question that fundraisers actually do have this knowledge, which, as this research suggests, some may not.

However, irrespective of whether they do or do not currently have sufficient knowledge to take the lead in driving forward ambitious partnerships, the opportunity for charities to lead partnerships is there if they can acquire this knowledge in the future. In effect, Company Interviewee 7 is arguing that if charities want more ambitious partnerships with companies, then they are the ones who are going to have to instigate, drive and lead these partnerships.

And in doing so, charity partnerships managers would come across as more professional and help to break down some of the negative attitudes and perceptions among company management and leadership we encountered in s4.1 that act as a barrier to internal support and buy-in.

In the literature review we said in connection to question of whether companies really needed to be ambitious in the value creation in partnerships (as discussed in s5.3 above) that:

"In terms of ambitious value creation, it may be the case that leading the charity horse to the ambitious water is enough, but the real challenge is in trying to make the corporate horse drink from the ambitious water."

(MacQuillin 2020, s5.4)

Inspiring them to drink the ambitious water might be a cornerstone of charity partnerships professionals' role.

6. Purpose-driven companies – threat or opportunity?

The past 10-15 years have seen the rise of purpose-driven companies – companies that don't just aim to do social good themselves, but that will make that a core purpose of their existence. Unlike CSR/partnerships being peripheral to core business for many companies, for purpose-driven companies, it is totally their core business. There are new vehicles of incorporation for these social enterprises and one such model of incorporation – the B-Corp – aims to create a “new sector of the economy that uses the power of business to solve social and environmental problems” (Marquis, Klaber and Thomason 2011).

The key factor with such purpose-driven brands is that they are aiming to solve social problems directly, and so do not necessarily need to partner with nonprofit organisations to achieve this. This could be a barrier to more ambitious CCPs. Is the rise of purpose-driven social enterprises such as B-Corps a threat or an opportunity for charities?

6.1 Threat

Our charity sector interviewees perceive a definite threat.

“Yeah, I think it's a real threat. So we've already identified that as a big threat. And so take Unilever for example. You could you could think they're a charity. Sometimes we put actually Unilver often on a PowerPoint slide and ask 'Is this a charity or company?'. And Triodos is a bank that you could argue almost looks like a charity...So do those B Corps need a charity to give them that stamp of approval? Maybe not. So it's a real risk for us.”

Charity interviewee 2

“Yes, we're seeing more and more of this happening. And yeah, I feel concerned about that. I think, traditionally, or, you know, historically, charities have always been seen as the experts, and they have the knowledge they have the experience. But then I think the other side to that is that perhaps corporates see us having a lack of resources and maybe take a little bit longer than maybe think that they can cut us out and go straight to it themselves. So I think there is a concern there.”

Charity interviewee 3

“Things have changed, things have evolved. And business now focuses on much more of our old turf than we give them credit for. We gave them cause related marketing. We gave them storytelling, we gave them emotional intelligence. We gave them all these tools and techniques, and they've gone they're bloody brilliant. They can engage with customers now in a far better way than they've ever done as businesses.”

Charity interviewee 4

“The endpoint of this trend logically is, you know, companies don't actually need charities, or let's say they don't need Western charities, if we're talking about an NGO with a multinational model, to deliver realize the benefits because in many ways, the danger for [a charity that works] overseas is, you know, we act as a middleman.”

This last quote from Charity Interviewee 5 leads to one of the specific reason why companies might want to create social value without engaging in partnerships - so they can have more control over the whole shooting match (outcomes, service deliver etc) without having to go through an intermediary to achieve social outcomes. This need for **ownership/control** - of and over what projects are undertaken, for the benefit of whom, and what resources are invested - is recognised by many company interviewees, who even postulate that companies might perceive that they can achieve better social outcomes on their own.

"And then the other thing is actually about ownership. Because if you set up your own project as a company, and you run that you really own the design, you own implementation, you own the delivery, you can really impact that rather than working with a charity."

Company interviewee 3

"So it's your people and your employees and you're driving that strategy, you can sort of dictate how it's delivered, what was delivered, but also making sure that, you know, the mitigating factors are managed, and you can go keep a close eye on what's going on minimizes the risks, I suppose, because it's all on your watch, rather than rely on a third party to make sure they sort of met the compliance criteria for things."

Company interviewee 5

"Major corporates can effectively tackle many different types of problems, whether it's in their supply chain or the delivery of services, the front end, more often than not involving other partners or charities. They will be able to gain a much better understanding from the outside in, and therefore, focus and realign or reshape their approach to be more empathetic to some of the root causes of the problems."

Company interviewee 1

6.2 Opportunity

While there is consensus that purpose driven brands could, and do, present a serious threat to CCPs - and thus a barrier to the more ambitious types of partnerships if companies can achieve everything they would want to achieve through an ambitious partnership, but without the need to actually do so - some charity interviewees see opportunities and possibilities.

"And I think it's fantastic because at the end of the day, we all want to create real change, we want to make things better. And so I don't think we should see, you know, purpose-driven brands necessarily being a bad thing. I think there's a lot of good in that. And looking to have an opportunity to collaborate, we need to look more into that."

Charity interviewee 3 (who says this despite having said that they perceive purpose-driven brands to be a threat to CCPs, as quoted above)

“Without a shadow of a doubt, there's been a massive shift now from businesses going from profit-led to more purpose driven. And, of course, charities have been doing that for forever and a day. So we are absolutely uniquely placed to take advantage of that, in terms of aligning ourselves with various industries and businesses and that kind of thing. However, there is still that traditional mindset in amongst the sector of working with charities because of the risks and the lack of knowledge and skills.”

Charity interviewee 9

“But the opportunity exists around the same thing, the ability for us to be able to compel and corral and collaborate across businesses, and to see us as the conduit for skill sharing for knowledge sharing for bringing these social values and social issues to life, across businesses and across communities across global nations is where charities can play a role.”

Charity interviewee 4

And both companies and charities think there will probably always be a need for charities' knowledge and expertise, to provide things that companies can't such as access to charity beneficiaries, but also the associational *value* (such as trust) and *interactive value* (such as new learning) that come from partnership working.

“My gut sense is that it would be a threat. However, not all organizations are going to be able to do what charities deliver out there. Certainly some charities deliver unbelievable value, if that's the right word. You know, they're not expensive to support yet they deliver a huge amount to the community because of that.”

Charity interviewee 4

“But even though if you're doing that, most likely, they're going to be working with local charities on the ground to help them. So the balance may be that there's more of the work happening in companies. But I think often you still need to have those touch points with charities or local organisations on the ground to help you, even if it's to help you identify beneficiaries and reach them.

Company interviewee 4

“Potentially, charities could be seen as redundant in some of that work, but I think charities are a vital part because they can often reach places people that businesses perhaps can't reach so easily. From a business perspective, charities tend to be very trusted in their local communities. And there's an issue more widely about trusting in charities, but from my experience, charities in the community are trusted by that community in a way that perhaps businesses aren't so much.”

Charity interviewee 1

Finally, not all companies will be able to or want to deliver social value on their own, which give charities much more opportunity to work with those who do not:

“We need to adapt our value. And you know, our proposition and what we're going to add to those B Corp companies. Maybe we decided we can't compete with them. And actually,

they're fine on their own. And we need to work more with the laggards because that's where we can have the credibility."

Charity interviewee 2

Those 'laggards' might be the smaller charities who did not necessarily consider that they wanted to create more value, perhaps because they thought they could not (they were too small to invest sufficient resources). However, shifting the conversation about partnerships from one of an aspiration for a different type of partnership to one of ambition to create more value could help to change the narrative and break through barriers.

6.3 Further risks

Nonetheless, despite the opportunities, there is a risk to the rise of social enterprises and purpose-driven companies that extend beyond risks to future ambitious partnerships.

One such risk is that it could exacerbate the power imbalance that sometimes exists in CCPs (see s5.3), but not so much a power imbalance within the partnerships, but a power imbalance between the corporate and the beneficiaries and/or local NGOs they are dealing with.

"[There] could be a more negative connotation in that if we talk about the, you know, the power imbalances that we touched on, you can imagine, if you're a corporate and you want more control about certain things, it's easier for you to get that when you deal directly with a downstream smaller partner than with a big global multinational."

Charity interviewee 5

Although the above quote from Charity Interviewee 5 does not mention this, there are also accountability issues in such a power relationship: to whom are such social enterprises accountable for how they deliver social good? Charities are regulated in this respect. And while social enterprises in the UK are regulated (by Companies House) and self-regulated (by Social Enterprise UK and B-Corps) (Burne James 2015), there is "no consensus over the true nature of social enterprise, no golden rule to balancing profit and purpose" (Burne James 2015; Cook 2014).

A question raised by both company and charity interviewees is how can purpose driven companies be compelled to continue to deliver social good if this is outside of their self-regulation?

"As long as it's there's a clear way of regulating the impact of that. So that business actually is [regulated in] the way that they communicate around the social impact that they have is well-evidenced. It's robust and everything that they do is doing the right way."

Charity interviewee 6

"I think they probably don't get held to account in the same way the charities do. I think charities get the often the rough end of the stick in all of this. They have to generate their

money from the general public and are scrutinized and held to a higher standard than businesses are in terms of their activities and how they spend. So I would be interested to know more about how businesses would be held to account."

Charity interviewee 1

"Maybe part of that is essentially trying to ensure that, you know, corporates stick to, to that implicit promise that they're making, you know, to be a bit more sort of campaigning as it were to be to be that voice on behalf of the smaller charities and smaller communities."

Charity interviewee 5

The challenge is summed up by Company Interviewee 5: what is to prevent companies changing their CSR priorities in the future, what happens to the beneficiaries who had been relying on their support if the company changes its focus on delivering social outcomes to a different area, and how are they accountable for that.

"So that's kind of what I meant by the risk knows who said that that's the strategic objective of the business for like three years phase or, for one a better description, this charity work really well with them and then in three years' time have a different strategic objective and all of a sudden not part of the business is disbanded and they go and try and do something different."

Company Interviewee 5

6.4 Summary

This research shows that charities see purpose driven brands as a threat to ambitious CCPs (because companies can create the same value without a partnerships) and there is consensus among charity and company interviewees about why companies would want to go it alone - to have more control/ownership over delivering social outcomes.

However, there are opportunities. Making the most of those opportunities will be informed by the central narrative of this research - partnership managers at charities will need to have sufficient knowledge and storytelling/relationship building skill to get buy-in from companies and their management.

7. How will the Coronavirus pandemic impact ambitious partnerships?

This project initially began with research for the literature review in autumn 2019. At that point, the Coronavirus pandemic was just the plot of a science fiction film. Even when we began the interviews for this phase of the project in February 2020, there was still no inkling that the lockdown that has so damaged the charity sector (and of course, all sectors of the UK economy) was just around the corner. But when this did hit, we added a question about what people thought would be the effects of the pandemic on ambitious CCPs.

7.1 Generally pessimistic

Unsurprisingly, there is confusion and uncertainty about what this will bring. There is some hope for the future. But generally the short-term consensus is quite pessimistic.

For a start there is the recognition from both sides that CSR budgets are some of the first things to be cut during a recession, and that the drawbridge was already being pulled up on some partnerships. The risk of this happening is magnified when partnerships are seen as peripheral to the CSR strategy or core business objectives.

"Charity partnerships are going to be affected by declining income at companies. And I know for sure from the current budget, we're not going to be able to cover the funds that are raised by customers and colleagues. We just haven't got the budget to give that money. And then the other thing is obviously, with most charities, my previous experience, people had MoUs rather than contracts. And so we were already told before we went on furlough to look at all of our relationships, all of our partnerships and all of our contracts and put a stop to kind of any payment."

Company interviewee 3

"My initial thinking is I am really worried. We've made some huge steps in terms of the beyond profit piece since the [2008] recession, you know, companies really give a shit about stuff like social purpose, CSR, all that stuff, diversity and inclusion, all that really, really important stuff, and I am very, very worried that that will get parked as we go into another recession."

Company interviewee 7

"There's a massive risk for things to take a step back. Earlier we were talking about [whether] charity partnerships [were] just a bolt on rather than being a core and you know, if you've got shareholders here, you know, drops and dividends and, you know, bottom lines are going to be really, really, hard hit this year, you know that the first thing, is the charity partnership, the first thing that drops."

Company interviewee 5

"The initial impact [is] everybody's [i.e. companies] just sort of pulled up the drawbridge and they're all [companies] focusing on their own self survival, if you like in the very short term. I think in the medium term over the next few months when perhaps this becomes a new normal for a while, and perhaps we'll start to see some of the businesses looking to engage with charities locally to them that are perhaps responsive to the Covid crisis particularly which might cause problems for those that aren't but are still transacting business as usual. And how that affects it long term. I have absolutely no idea."

Charity interviewee 1

A further risk to ambitious partnerships is that whatever help is or can be provided reverts to Philanthropic and Transactional partnerships because what charities most need is money. And some company interviewees reported considerably increased demand for short-term support from charities.

"Like I mentioned earlier, in maybe that's the project that they were looking at working together on, it's actually not the most important right now, both in terms of where funding goes for the charities. Also in terms of societal impacts. So it might have been a usually strategically aligned project, but actually, right now...the beneficiaries of that charity need is like, you know, basic stuff."

Company interviewee 4

"When things are tricky, people tend not to look outside of what's right in front of them. And I am, and I get it and I understand it, and I think charities will be equally guilty of it. I think in some organisations, what you'll see is a great, great drive for innovation and creativity. And I think in others you'll see it almost like a knee jerk and retread retrenching and with reversion to what we've always done."

Charity interviewee 1

But having said that, there is a big risk to short-term transaction income because many companies will not be in a position to invest necessary resources.

"We are not getting as much from staff at the moment. So our programmes are very much colleague focused. Yes. So please do the math. A lot of the fundraising comes from colleagues, especially customer-facing staff. Yeah. So at the moment, because a lot of our staff are key workers, they are manic and supporting customers."

Company interviewee 4

"My hunch is that existing corporate partnerships will make their contractual payments where they can - but with a lot of businesses eyeing up administrators right now, no charity MoU or commercial agreement will stand up to much strength against force majeure clause - but the large part of most traditional corporate partnerships comes from employee/customer engagement - right now that's not happening, and won't for the rest of 2020-21 I fear."

Charity interviewee 4

And there is little headspace for long-term partnerships because everyone is so focused on surviving the immediate crisis.

“And the focus then is so much on trying to get ourselves out of the economic doldrums, that we will be in for a long period, that actually there isn't a space in anybody's mind to think about looking at long-term innovative, creative partnerships.

Charity interviewee 1

“Those truly transformational partnerships will remain steadfast for the short-medium term, but if we head straight past recession and into depression then I wouldn't bank on anything.”

Charity interviewee 4

So there is plenty of uncertainty for the future as well a concern about what is going to happen in the short term, with both charities and companies wondering how many of the others will still be around on the other side of the pandemic, or how many of them will have folded. One company interviewee spoke about the partnerships with small charities that were due to commence at the end of 2020, and wondered if those charities would still be in existence.

Further uncertainty exists around whether companies will have different CSR objectives and priorities once the pandemic is over, some of which may be good, some of which may be less good - for example, it might accelerate companies' move to deliver social purpose on their own without partnering with charities, the threats and opportunities of which were considered in s6.

“I think they will quite naturally have different priorities and I think it will be up to charities to remind them of the benefit of working with us and what that can do for them. I'm expecting a few companies to launch larger programmes, but they won't be coordinated and will support the brand name charities, meanwhile providing significant distraction for trustees of non-brand index charities who are already putting pressure on senior charity executives right now. There will be some new entrants into the brand index - Trussell Trust for one - but there will likely be plenty of space from leavers.”

Charity interviewee 4

“We taught companies how to be issue- and values-based in their marketing and PR campaigns, and they'll just fold it into their marketing cycle and bypass charities who are licking their wounds and regrouping for years (as is usually our way).”

Charity interviewee 4.

7.2 Potential positives for the future

However, research interviewees held out hope once the pandemic is over that this would lead to some potentially positive changes.

"If charities can find provision, they will still be able to build these more ambitious shared value partnerships that are co-created, so that companies feel like they own the partnership so that companies, even in light of like [the pandemic] will still be able to support the organizations that they're partnered with. So I think there is opportunity, definitely, they'll definitely be an opportunity."

Company interviewee 3

"Because our staff are so passionate about getting involved, I expect at that point, we're going to get a huge amount of, of requests from staff saying, Okay, now that we've figured out what we're doing, and I want to get started again, because we usually get like over 50 per cent of colleagues will volunteer at least once a year."

Company interviewee 4

However, the above quote is about employee fundraising, which is often associated with more Transactional partnerships. Any post-pandemic willingness to get back to supporting charities does not necessarily indicate a willingness to support resource-intensive Integrative partnerships. But, and this is a big but, ambitious partnerships, as this project has conceived them, is about creating more value than was previously being considered. But it is not about the type of partnerships, which is a vehicle through which that value is created and delivered.

In a post-Coronavirus world, it may be that both charities and companies need to lower the expectations about what is ambitious. If the value they most need is transferred resource value (i.e. money), then it is appropriate that charities should have an ambition to receive it and companies should have an ambition to create and transfer it. If that is the value that is most needed, it is entirely appropriate to be ambitious in creating that type of value.

This is again another example of where it helps to visualise ambition as a mindset that creates value and not an aspiration for a type of partnership.

Nonetheless, as Company Interview 3 says above, there is still an opportunity for Integrative partnerships – not everyone will want to retrench, and as Charity Interview 4 also said above, we can expect to see some new entrants to the partnerships field.

The role of corporate fundraisers/partnership managers was discussed in s5.4, in which Company Interviewee 7 says it will be the responsibility of charities to drive these ambitious partnerships. This point is also made – by Company Interviewee 3 – in respect of post-Coronavirus ambitious partnerships.

"It might be creating super opportunity for kind of these types of partnerships, but again, this is not going to come from business. This really has to be driven by charities, you've got

to take something to community person or CSR person who will they will feel like yes, this is the thing that we want to get into.”

Company interviewee 3

“It'll be charities that understand the mutual benefit of those partnerships and can think creatively and innovatively about them and not revert to business as usual, they'll be the ones that can respond quickly. And that doesn't necessarily mean the ones that have got the biggest teams either. I think actually smaller charities, regional charities could steal a bit of a march here in terms of working with the businesses in new and innovative ways, because they tend not to be bound by the same structures and decision-making processes as in larger organizations. But yes, I think you'll be the ones that can respond flexibly and innovatively to the to the future are able to reinvent themselves.”

Charity interviewee 1

Again, we come back to the knowledge of partnership managers at charities. If the ambition during and immediately after the pandemic is for partnerships to deliver more money for charities in need, then this is business as usual for many charities. But to kick this up a gear to be able to deliver more ambitious *interactive* and *synergistic* value to create more value for society as a whole will require increased specialist knowledge, and those charities that have this may have an advantage as the overlapping worlds of corporate fundraising and corporate social responsibility rebuild after the pandemic.

8. Conclusion and next steps

A finding that emerges strongly from this research is that charity-corporate partnerships struggle to move beyond the Philanthropic/Transactional end of the Collaboration Continuum, where partnerships exist mainly in order to transfer resources from the company to the charity (that resource being chiefly money); rather than incentivise and facilitate the more Integrative types of partnership that can create more and different value for both partners.

This report terms this phenomenon the 'short-term, transactional anchor', and there are various factors that contribute to it.

Partly, there is a comfort zone in that this is what partnerships professionals and their organisations have always done, and thus they are used to it.

For companies, partnerships may be perceived as peripheral to achieving their core business objective and even their main CSR programme. Companies may not need to extend beyond this end of the CC, because they can meet their CSR objectives through Philanthropic and Transactional partnerships.

But the main factor that contributes to the anchor – in both charities and companies – is a lack of knowledge: a lack of knowledge about partnerships process and models and the extra value they can unlock and create; and a lack of understanding about each other.

This lack of knowledge is to be found in partnerships managers at charities and companies.

But the lack of knowledge also extends to the leadership and management at NPOs and companies. The leaders of both types of organisation hold many negative attitudes/perceptions about partnerships (such as they require too much investment to be successful) and about the partner organisation (such that they are a reputational risk, or that they lack professionalism).

Whether or not some of these attitudes and perceptions are justified, they reinforce the idea that partnerships need to be short-term and transactional, because a longer-term, more ambitious partnership is perceived as being too great a risk.

The negative attitudes of senior management and leadership mean that it is difficult for both fundraisers and CSR professionals to secure internal buy-in and support for more ambitious partnerships.

The central hypothesis of this paper is therefore:

A lack of knowledge among leadership about partnership processes and partner organisation drives a culture that does not buy-in to ambitious partnerships.

While a lack of knowledge of partnership professionals is a significant barrier to securing internal organisational support.

The solution to this is to find way to mitigate those perceived risks and change the negative attitudes of leadership. To do this however, charity and company partnerships managers must have sufficient knowledge of their own disciplines and the models and processes that can create that kind of value.

However, there is a question mark over whether some or many of them do have this knowledge.

The fundamental barrier to more ambitious CCPs is therefore the knowledge - or lack thereof - of partnership managers at both charities and companies. The solution is therefore to provide them with this knowledge through specialist training/education courses and/or materials that focus very specifically on a) partnerships processes and b) the challenges faced by partner organisations in their working environment and how partnership working can help with those.

This knowledge can then be used to construct better stories with which to engage leadership and build relationships with them to secure internal support for ambitious CCPs.

Key to doing this will be to show that partnership working is not peripheral to a company's business but central to it; and that partnerships are the means to the company achieving its CSR objectives, but the partnership is not the objective in and of itself.

Leadership at companies will be better engaged by talking about the social purpose that partnerships can achieve rather than the transactional nuts and bolts (such as cake bakes). However, the difficulty of being able to measure social outcomes has been remarked upon, so there is an opportunity for NPOs to work with companies to create new metrics for partnerships.

But this points to another challenge for partnership managers at charities, in that the targets they are given for the partnerships are often short-term, financial targets. A key challenges for partnership managers at charities is to have such targets removed.

To help build these relationships and tell these stories, corporate 'fundraising' many need to re-evaluate its role. It has been suggested in this report by interviewees that partnerships should not be the preserve of the fundraising department, since this always brings the main objective back to money; while ambitious partnerships will need to be driven and led by charities rather than companies.

To achieve this wholehearted organisational support for ambitious CCPs will require a new 'collective ambition' or 'culture of partnerships' among the whole organisation to create more value.

The creation of such a collective ambition will be helped if partnerships professional can shift their conception of what partnerships are and how they operate, changing it from an aspirational mindset for a particular type of partnership, to one that focuses on creating more value.

As Charity Interviewee 5 said:

“Transformative partnerships shouldn't be defined by scale...It's more, I think, a mindset from the charity's perspective and the company as to what they want to achieve...Of course, there will be challenges around resourcing capacity, but if the desire is there, on both sides, I do believe that, you know, that can be overcome.”

8.1 Next steps

This phase of the report has not set out to make recommendations, which will be done in the final report. However, it is possible to summarise in bullet points the overarching areas in which specific recommendations need to be delivered:

- Provide educational and training materials about partnerships working and to start requiring that partnership professionals have requisite knowledge
- Devise new metrics for measuring the success of CCPs, and change the culture of short-term targets
- Devise new narratives and stories about CCPs to break down the barriers to organisational support among management and leadership and create collective ambition to create more value
- Start conversations on the appropriate role of corporate fundraisers/fundraising and their partnerships with companies.

Appendix A – research interviewees

Charity sector

Damian Chapman – director of strategic marketing and income generation, The Charity for Civil Servants

Tum Kazunga – chief executive, Habitat for Humanity Great Britain

Rachal Minchinton – head of opportunity management, Hafal

Lisa Murdoch – head of philanthropy and partnerships, Children 1st

Sophie Powell-White – head of partnership management, Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity

Michael Regan – senior corporate partnerships manager, LandAid

Johnny Smyth – fundraising and communications manager, Action Mental Health

Kerrina Thorogood – head of partnerships, WWF

Ghalib Ullah – head of commercial partnerships, Parkinson's UK

Corporate sector

Jenni Barkley – communications and corporate responsibility manager, Belfast Harbour

Pauline Giroux – senior manager - social purpose and sustainability, Yorkshire Building Society

Chi Kurangwa – community advisor (foundation and employee engagement), Kingfisher plc

Jo Major – head of external relations, APSCo

Crispin Manners – chairman and ceo, Onva Consulting

Noorzaman Rashid – chief executive, Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors

John White – chief executive, Bacta

Appendix B – research questions

B.1 Charity sector

3. What do you think are the main reasons why charities engage in corporate partnerships?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- What outcomes do charities hope partnerships with companies will deliver for them?
- #### **4. What’s your opinion on the level of knowledge and skill of corporate fundraisers and partnerships managers at charities, specifically, are you confident that they would know enough to be able to create more ambitious partnerships?**

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- Do fundraisers/partnerships leads know, for example, about the various models (such as the Collaboration Continuum) that exist? If not, why not?

5. Have you noticed or encountered among charities any negative attitudes towards working with companies that might hold them back from more ambitious partnerships? If so, what are they and why do you think they exist?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- Some people have said charities have said working with companies is like sleeping with the enemy. Do you think this widespread view and what can be done to counter it?
 - Do some charities approach companies thinking they ought to give them money (because they have some kind of duty to because of the profits they make)?
- #### **6. How do you think SMTs and trustees would react if partnership leads proposed more ambitious partnerships, which might include those that went beyond simply giving money or short-term transactions such as sponsorship or charity of the year?**

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- Why would they act the way you think they would?

7. What types and level of risk do you think charities associate with partnering with companies on the more complex types of corporate partnerships?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- Do some charities not go ahead with some types of partnerships because they think the risk is just too great? What types of charities might these be and why would they think that way?
- Is a possible power imbalance a potential problem for charities – might they be considered that the company can ‘call the shots’ too much?
- Is there a sense that some charities think more ambitious partnerships are simply ‘not for us’ – i.e. they’re for the bigger charities with more resources?

8. How important do you think charities consider corporate partnerships to be in achieving their mission?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- Do charities view companies as potential partners to help them bring about change or do they mainly see partnerships as providing tangible benefits such as money? If so, why do you think that is? THIS QUESTION MAY ALREADY HAVE BEEN COVERED.

9. Some companies aim to create more social value themselves through purpose-driven brands and vehicles such as B-Corps and social enterprise. How much of a threat is this to more ambitious charity-company partnerships?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- Why are they doing this – i.e. why would they want to create social value on their own initiative and NOT partner with a charity to do it?

10. How do you think the Coronavirus emergency will affect how charity-corporate partnerships develop, both in the short-term during the emergency and once we get through it?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- What might be the consequence of this emergency on the more ambitious types of partnerships – those that aim to create most value beyond just financial transactions? Do you think partnerships will be required to meet a short-term need to get in as much money as possible, or do you think charities will be looking beyond that to creating longer-term social value?

B.2 Corporate sector

1. What do you think are the main reasons why companies engage in corporate partnerships?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- What outcomes do companies hope partnerships with charities will deliver for them?
- How much do you think partnerships are driven by short-term objectives, such as maximising profit? IF NOT HERE, ASK AS PART OF Q6

2. What's your opinion on the level of knowledge and skill of charity partnerships managers at companies, specifically, are you confident that they would know enough to be able to create more ambitious partnerships?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- Do partnerships managers know, for example, about the various models (such as the Collaboration Continuum) that exist? If not, why not?
- Do partnership manager have full understanding of how partnering with charities could help them achieve their companies' CSR objectives

3. Have you noticed or encountered among companies any negative attitudes towards working with charities that might hold them back from more ambitious partnerships? If so, what are they and why do you think they exist?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- Do companies trust charities to be able to deliver what they want or need from the partnership?
- Do companies feel that they don't get sufficient recognition from engaging with charities?
- Is there any concern about attitudes in the charity sector that companies are the 'enemy'?

4. How do you think SMTs, board members and stockholders would react if partnership professionals proposed more ambitious partnerships, which might include those that went beyond delivering transactional benefits such as through CRM or sponsorship?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- Why would they act the way you think they would?

5. What types and level of risk do you think companies associate with partnering with charities on the more complex types of corporate partnerships?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

This question may have already been answered by some of the follow-ups to previous questions, but if not, they can be asked here, or reiterated, particularly:

- Do companies trust charities to be able to deliver what they want or need from the partnership?

6. How important do you think companies consider partnerships with charities to be in achieving their business objectives?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- Do companies engage in charity partnerships simply to meet various expectations that they do so – in other words, to meet the ‘compliance obligations’?
- How much do you think partnerships are driven by short-term objectives, such as maximising profit? IF NOT ASKED IN Q1

7. If companies want to create more value for society at large, have you noticed them trying to do this on their own initiative without partnering with charities?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- How are they doing this? – can prompt them with B-Corps, social enterprise, purpose driven brands if necessary.
- Why do you think they are doing this?

8. How do you think the Coronavirus emergency will affect how charity-corporate partnerships develop, both in the short-term during the emergency and once we get through it?

Follow-up questions (optional – guide to take conversation forward):

- What might be the consequence of this emergency on the more ambitious types of partnerships – those that aim to create most value beyond just financial transactions? Do you think ambitious partnerships will remain high on companies’ CSR agendas, or is there a risk they will be overtaken by shorter-term commercial needs?

References

- Austin, J.E. (2000). Strategic collaboration between nonprofits and businesses. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 29(1 suppl), 69-97.
- Austin, J.E., & Seitanidi, M.M. (2012a). Collaborative value creation: A review of partnering between nonprofits and businesses: Part 1. Value creation spectrum and collaboration stages. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41(5), 726-758.
- Austin, J.E., & Seitanidi, M.M. (2012b). Collaborative value creation: A review of partnering between nonprofits and businesses. Part 2: Partnership processes and outcomes. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41(6), 929-968.
- Breeze, B. (2017). *The New Fundraisers: Who Organises Charitable Giving In Contemporary Society?* Bristol: Policy Press.
- Burk, P. (2003). *Donor-Centred Fundraising*. Chicago: Cygnus Applied Research Inc/Burk and Associates Ltd.
- Burne James, S. (2015). It might be time to rationalise the regulation of social enterprise. *Third Sector*, 22 May. <http://thirdsector.thirdsector.co.uk/2015/05/22/it-might-be-time-to-rationalise-the-regulation-of-social-enterprise/> - accessed 31 May 2020.
- Burnett, K. (1992). *Relationship Fundraising: A Donor-Based Approach to the Business of Raising Money*. London: White Lion Press .
- Cho, M., & Kelly, K. S. (2014). Corporate donor-charitable organization partners: A coorientation study of relationship types. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 43(4), 693-715.
- Cook, S. (2014). 'Profit with purpose': the dispute over doing well while doing good. *Third Sector*, 18 December. <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/profit-purpose-dispute-doing-doing-good/social-enterprise/article/1326694> - accessed 31 May 2020.
- Joyaux, S. (2011). *Strategic Fund Development: Building Profitable Relationships That Last*. Third edition. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons.
- Gummesson, E. (1999) *Total Relationship Marketing*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- MacQuillin, I.R. (Forthcoming). *Accident prevention: The case for a qualifying pathway for fundraising*. London: Rogare - The Fundraising Think Tank.
- MacQuillin, I.R. (2020). *The value of ambition: How charities and companies can create more value through ambitious partnerships*. London: Rogare - The Fundraising Think Tank.
- MacQuillin, I.R. (2017). *Less than my job's worth: Is fundraising a profession? And does it matter if it isn't?* London: Rogare - The Fundraising Think Tank.

MacQuillin, I.R. (2016). *Relationship Fundraising: Where Do We Go From Here? Volume 3 - Trends and Challenges Identified by Practitioners*. London: Rogare - The Fundraising Think Tank.

MacQuillin, I.,R., and Rogare International Advisory Panel (2017). *Relationship fundraising: where do we go from here? Breaking down the barriers*. London: Rogare - The Fundraising Think Tank.

Marquis, C., Klaber, A., & Thomason, B. (2010). *B Lab: Building a new sector of the economy*. Harvard Business School Case Study, 411047.

Ready, D. A., & Truelove, E. (2011). The power of collective ambition. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(12), 94-102.

Sargeant, A., MacQuillin, I., and Shang J. (2016). *Relationship Fundraising: Where Do We Go From Here? Vol 2 - Review Of Theory From Social Psychology*. London: Rogare - The Fundraising Think Tank.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.

Get in touch

Ian MacQuillin - Director
ianmacquillin@rogare.net
+44 (0)7977 422273

www.rogare.net
Twitter: @RogareFTT
Facebook: search 'Critical Fundraising Forum'

Rogare - The Fundraising Think Tank CIC is a community interest company registered in the UK, registration number 11807930.

Rogare brand identity created by Rebecca Woodall at Bluefrog Fundraising.

Associate Members

Rogare is supported in its work by a number of Associate Members - partners to the fundraising sector that share our critical fundraising ethos. Our Associate Members are:



Ask Direct
Creative agency (Ireland)
<https://www.askdirect.ie>



Bluefrog
Creative agency (UK)
<https://bluefroglondon.com>



Stephen Thomas
Full-service fundraising agency (Canada)
<https://stephenthomas.ca>



Ethicalll
Telephone fundraising agency (UK)
<https://www.ethicalll.org.uk>

