

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PROCESSES OF MULTI-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS
FOR DEVELOPMENT: AN IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION OF ONE COSTA RICAN
INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATION

By

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To Him, who brought me here, guided me, held my hand every step of the way, and now holds the key to my future. My life could not be in better hands.

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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Multi-sector partnerships, also called public-private partnerships, are quickly becoming one of the most sought after forms of collaboration. The problems that governments are facing have become too intricate and overwhelming for a single organization, public or private, to take on by itself. This study aims to analyze the internal communication processes of multi-sector partnerships for development by focusing on the work that a Costa Rican organization is doing. When working with multiple actors from public, private, and nonprofit sectors communication is key to secure an effective and efficient management of the partnerships.

Through the use of a qualitative approach, in-depth interviews were conducted in order to discover what communication tools and strategies this organization was using and how successful they were. The study uses three main theoretical frameworks: communitarian public relations, communication in development, and theory developed around multi-sector partnerships, namely the seven Cs of collaboration.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The interconnectedness of the world we live in is undeniable. With every passing day, newer and better ways to stay connected are developed. The business world is constantly looking for more efficient ways to manage its operations internationally, and the communication industry strives to make the most of the emergent technologies to target more segmented audiences. However, as Amir Dossal (2004), executive director for the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, said, “As globalization and information technologies draw the peoples of the world closer, so do they knit together social, economic, political and cultural challenges” (¶ 2). The repercussions of said levels of connectivity are palpable in the realities that, not only industries, but countries experience today. The geographical borders among countries have been blurred on the maps of the commercial world; and with them, the social issues of the nations have also spread throughout the map.

The prosperity this transnational development has brought to some regions has also represented the deepening of critical economic and social situations for others. Disease and poverty have spread throughout the world at an alarmingly fast pace, and the social gap between the rich and the poor is far from being breached. The issues range from social to economic, environment to health, and education to employment.

What once were clearly defined roles for the private, public, and civil society sectors are increasingly shared by all three. This collective responsibility has led to the creation of short-term alliances and long-term partnerships that aim to address the social, economic, and political issues together. Dossal (2004) also stated that this phenomenon became more popular starting in the 1980s, when the blending of

responsibilities brought about an increase in the number of civil society organizations. These were attempting to provide a solution to the critical social problems the nations were experiencing, by working alongside the government and private sectors.

When talking about civil society it is important to define the term before we proceed. Dutta-Bergman (2005) states that civil society can, and has been, interpreted in many different ways, depending on the circumstances in which it is used. It has also evolved from being a synonym for a political society in the eighteenth century, to a more modern interpretation as everything that happens outside the realm of the State (Kumar, 1993). This particular research will understand civil society as the collective citizenship that is independent from the private and public sectors; namely nonprofit organizations and regular citizens that execute they right to voice their opinions and concerns.

The social issues that were notorious in the 1980s are still relevant today. Governments are struggling to fulfill their obligations and to attend to the necessities of their citizens. The necessities of their nations are more than they have the time, resources, and expertise to address adequately or effectively. A report by the State of the Nation-Region Program in 2008, presented relevant data on this subject. Specifically in Central America, there is still a strong dependency on imported food, an irony in a highly agricultural region with the capacity to export great variety of products. Approximately 40 percent of Central Americans are living in poverty, despite the fact that social spending was increased in comparison to the data in 2003. Even more concerning is the fact that public social policies in Central America continue “to be amongst the lowest in Latin America” (p. 26). Lastly, employment continues to be a struggle for citizens, 41 percent of jobs in the region have been classified as low-

productivity and low-income, making it harder for individuals and families who turn to employment as a means of climbing the social and economic ladder.

According to Kolka, van Tulderb, and Kostwinderc (2008), it was since the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development held at Johannesburg, that multi-sector partnerships became much more important on a global scale. The private (business) and nonprofit (i.e., non-government organizations, foundations, civil society) sectors have taken on the task of addressing the issues that are undermining the sustainability and development of their countries. By coming together, they are attempting to alleviate the pressure on the government and, at the same time, address the nationwide problems.

A unilateral effort from the government is not enough, the challenges are too big and far too many. Cañequ (2008) clearly established that; even though there is a strong public responsibility to address these issues, their multidimensional quality requires a set of actions that cannot be put forward unilaterally by the government. Part of the reason why the public institutions are incapable of single-handedly resolving the social problems in their countries is because many of them have been caused by “market inefficiency, deficient public policy making, and a lack of resources and financing for development programs” (Cañequ, 2008, p. xxix), all of which are tied to the public office. Cardona and Sariego (2010) contributed to this argument by stating that the “unsustainable management of resources in an interconnected world, makes it hard to respond efficiently to the development challenges and opportunities that arise” (p. 4).

Multi-sector partnerships for development are born as an answer to the multitude of social issues that are calling for the government's attention (Stott, 2008). Individually, sectors might try to address the issues they consider more pressing or relevant; however, single efforts can only do so much. Even more, they risk the chance of clashing or overlapping with similar efforts from other organizations. These well-intentioned efforts will result in less-than-ideal outcomes, leaving the organizations disappointed or frustrated (Stott, 2008). The resources and time can be maximized when the different sectors come together, merging their efforts and working towards a shared goal.

In the quest for a more inclusive approach several private and public entities have started to partner with the hopes of working together towards a shared goal. Their efforts have led them to the creation of multi-sector partnerships for development, and with it the surge of a new actor in the process: intermediary organizations. Also called "backbone support organizations" (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 40) these organizations, usually nonprofit, take over the coordination and direction of multi-sector partnerships for development. While collaboration between multiple organizations from different sectors can occur without the aid of a support system, the opportunities for success are much higher with the intervention of an intermediary organization.

The United Nations (UN) has also acknowledged the relevance and significance of these partnerships and created the UN Office for Partnerships. The UN stands by the fact that "partnerships have emerged as the new way of doing business: Using the skills of business, the capital of philanthropy, and the rigor of the marketplace, partnerships can develop and deliver system-changing solutions" (The United Nations, n.d., ¶ 2). The

European Commission, in their report titled *Guidelines for successful public-private partnerships*, was very clear in stating that these types of alliances are, by no means, the panacea of the world's social problems. However, they are a plausible solution when "it can be demonstrated that they will achieve additional value compared with other approaches, [and it can be assured that there will be] an effective implementation structure" (2003, p. 4).

Defining Multi-sector Partnerships for Development

This form of collaboration has primarily focused on addressing countries' social concerns. They are created with the purpose of bolstering the individual assets each sector has, in hopes of creating a more strategic and effective approach to the problem areas that have been identified. Unifying the qualities and expertise of the participating members will immediately result in an increase of the resources and competencies available. Dossal (2004) described it as "a situation where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (p. 3). Stott (2008) pointed out that the diversity of resources contributes to the long-term sustainability of the programs and a "possibility of achieving a more integrated and stable society" (p. 3).

Ros Tennyson (as cited in Stott, 2008), Director of The Partnering Institute, argued that these types of alliances were meant to be innovative. She also said, "From my perspective, good alliances are innovative: if an alliance is not creating something new, then why bother?" (p. 3, translation by author). However, if such innovation is to happen there needs to be a good dose of planning and strategy involved, as well as a shared set of objectives. Dossal (2004) argued that creativity and rationality have to coexist in order to strike a positive outcome. He argued,

Public/private partnerships require a balance of idealism and pragmatism, creative vision and managed expectations, pooled resources and willingness to compromise.

But a well executed partnership will help both business and individuals. (p. 11)

Before going into any further detail about how these partnerships operate, it is imperative to establish an operational definition for the concept of multi-sector partnerships for development. There are numerous ways of referring to a certain way of doing something; however, in essence the approach remains the same regardless of what it is called. In the area of partnerships between two or more sectors, one can find in the literature two main forms of addressing this phenomenon, each slightly different from the other, and at the same time sharing some common elements.

Traditional Partnerships

Also known as public-private partnerships (Cardona & Sariego, 2010, Casado, 2008; Dilger & Findeisen, n.d.) or strategic alliances (Berger, Cunningham, & Drumwright ,2004) this model follows a more business-minded approach, “give us your money and we’ll spend it” as Dossal (2004) called it. It can be employed to address a variety of issues, beyond those of a social kind. They are generally tight legal contractual alliances with a rigorous vertical hierarchy and accountability systems. There is few to no participation from social members and everything is designed within a strict management by objectives setting (Casado, 2008). Additionally, Berger et al. (2004) called strategic alliances all of those that “involve the sharing of resources, knowledge, and capabilities,” but do not span the profit – nonprofit sectors (p. 2).

In other words, any type of business alliance, whether it is temporary or with a long-term purpose, that works for an objective other than social development falls under the category of a traditional partnership. There is no limit as to how many businesses or

organizations can participate or whether it must involve various sectors or industries; there is, however, a limitation to a very low or no involvement on behalf of any social agents, namely nonprofit organizations.

Partnerships for Development

These are often referred to as public-private partnerships for development (Cardona & Sariego, 2010; Casado, 2008), tripartite partnerships (Kolka et al., 2008), or social alliances (Berger et al., 2004). The main difference between partnerships for development and traditional partnerships rests on the objective for which they are created. When partnerships for development are formed, there is an inherently social issue to be addressed. This means there will always be a significant participation from social agents, like non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or civil society organizations. Whether this will involve two or more members from various sectors or industries becomes secondary. Additionally, Cardona and Sariego (2010) emphasized the use of a sustainable development strategy as the overarching framework to guide the actions within a multi-sector partnership for development.

In the case of social alliances, Berger et al. (2004) established that the transition between a strategic and a social alliance is complete when a) there is an active involvement from a nonprofit partner and b) there is a combination of both economic and non economic objectives driving the programs, meaning “objectives that focus on improving social welfare” (p. 2).

Kolka et al.(2008) made a particular distinction that not many other authors make, namely a clear division of roles. The author’s tripartite partnerships are composed of three distinct members: government, private sector and nonprofit sector, each one with a specific task to complete. “Companies provide specific knowledge and expertise,

NGOs the local embeddedness and contacts, and supporting activities such as training and capacity building, while the government supplies funding, usually to reduce risks, and facilitates the activities” (pp. 6-7). It could be disputed that said division of roles answers more to a qualification of the different members, as opposed to a responsibility imposed on them.

From a management perspective, there is a shared responsibility amongst the parties involved, in the same way that they operate within a horizontal distribution of work and authority. These partnerships operate under a legal framework; however, it is much more flexible than the one under which traditional partnerships operate. There are usually less restrictions and regulations internally, allowing members to cooperate freely with each other, thus furthering the synergy of resources and expertise. Compromise and collaboration are two strong components of partnerships for development. This is a situation where sectors that would normally have clearly different objectives are now working together to attain a single, shared goal. It is imperative that they put aside personal interests and work with the end product or beneficiary as a main motivating factor. (Cardona and Sariego, 2010; Casado, 2008, Kolka, 2008; “Alianzas P\xfublico-Privadas”, n.d.)

It is, therefore, after a careful study of the literature that for the purpose of this study, the term multi-sector partnerships for development (MSPD) will be utilized for the remaining of this paper. The term will refer to those forms of collaboration that involve representatives from at least two different sectors. This form of collaboration will have a clear understanding that the overarching principle and motivation will be the need to address a social problem in the country where these organizations operate.

As it was mentioned before, it must be clear that multi-sector partnerships for development are not the antidote to all social issues in the world. As Dossal (2004) put it

Partnerships cannot be a patchwork quilt of well-meaning intentions and ideas sewn together. They require nurturing, compromises, re-assessment. And maybe most of all, patience. Partnership building is generally not a speedy process – but it can be a very effective and rewarding endeavor. (p.8)

About this same matter, Sagawa and Segal (1999) said that these partnerships require “faith, imagination, and will. But [they are] an opportunity that our nation cannot afford to pass up” (¶ 5).

Multi-sector partnerships for development in the United States of America

This collaboration form is not exclusive to a particular country or culture. It has been adopted by many countries, the United States (US) not being the exception. The United States has been a pioneer in the development and growth of the public relations profession and, in many ways, has set the tone for the execution of public relations in Latin America (Molleda, 2001). Despite the fact that this research focuses on the reality of a small, Latin American country, a significant portion of the literature reviewed comes from American scholars; it is only appropriate to showcase some of the multi-sector partnerships for development which take place on American ground and that are tackling some of America’s biggest social issues.

The following are three examples of MSPD that currently operate in the United States at a national scale. In no way does this selection intends to be exclusive, however these collaborations represent the essence of what multi-sector partnerships are about.

100KIN10

Operating since January 2011 this movement was created to address the need for qualified STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) teachers across the country. More precisely, their objective is to train 100.000 teachers by the year 2021, hence the name 100Kin10. “100Kin10 is a growing partnership of over 80 cross-sector partner organizations unified by a single ambitious goal: to prepare all students with the high-quality STEM knowledge and skills needed to address our most pressing national and global challenges” (General FAQs, ¶ 3) and to this date their partner organizations include corporations, museums, institutes of higher education, foundations, states, nonprofit organizations, school districts and professional associations. Amongst the partners are some prestigious names such as Intel, NASA, Stanford Teacher Education Program, The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, Michigan State College of Education, Museum of Science and Industry to name a few.

This MSPD is has developed a strong platform overseen by the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute (UEI), here all candidate partners are evaluated to “ensure that accepted partners have both high-quality commitments and a capacity to execute them with excellence” (General FAQs, ¶ 5). The program has been developed in such a way that not only does it provide the teachers needed, but it also ensures the continuity of the program through a series of actions that retain the qualified teachers and help the movement to grow. The UEI “is developing a learning and R&D infrastructure, as well as tools for 100Kin10 partners to measure the quality and impact of their commitments” and also works to ensure that the best practices drawn from the implementation of 100KIN10 are shared with all the partners as learning resources to better the program as whole.

The challenges that arise from orchestrating such a long-term and ambitious project are numerous, which is precisely the reason why the collaboration of several organizations from different backgrounds is necessary to ensure the best outcome possible. The objective of training 100,000 teachers is far larger than any single entity can tackle, and it is a social issue that affects a multitude of industries and organizations both in the public and private sector. Therefore a collaboration of this type is the ideal solution.

UNITY through Violence Prevention

Urban Networks to Increase Thriving Youth (UNITY) has been working since 2005 to “prevent violence before it occurs, so that urban youth can thrive in safe environments with supportive relationships and opportunities for success” (About us, ¶ 1).

Led by the Prevention Institute and in collaboration with the Harvard School of Public Health, the UCLA School of Public Health and UCSF’s Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the initiative partners with the main cities in the US to promote collaboration between the public and private sectors to “maximize resources, ensure sustainability, and encourage effectiveness” (About Us, ¶ 1).

The work developed by UNITY has two main approaches, one is the development, implementation and evaluation of the prevention efforts; the second is raising awareness about the need for violence prevention and setting the stage so that the communities suffering from this epidemic can execute the programs aimed at creating peaceful and secure environments for the youth. Both these approaches require a strong emphasis on “data collection and analysis to pinpoint the populations and locations at greatest risk, identify risk and resilience factors, and develop and utilize

effective strategies to prevent violence before it occurs, and to reduce the impact of risk factors and the reoccurrence of violence” (Mission & Activities, ¶ 2).

Prevention is a smart approach for MSPD because it focuses their work on eliminating the problem instead of trying to deal with the consequences of the issue. Again, violence is a reality that all major cities deal with on a daily basis and it is a social concern that is too big for any single organization to address effectively.

Welcoming America

The final example for MSPDs in the United States deals with the issue of immigration, prejudices and racial discrimination. Immigration has become a priority subject in the last decade, especially with the increasing rate at which this population is growing. Statistics show that by 2005 one in eight Americans was an immigrant; this rapid growth has led to the creation of immigrant colonies in cities that haven’t had a history of immigration before such as Nashville, Boise and Omaha (Why We’re Needed, n.d.).

Welcoming America’s approach is unique because they target the communities where immigrants are settling down, and work to teach the residents that were born in the US to appreciate and value their immigrant neighbors. The initiative is adopted by a state, and then each state works to create safe and welcoming environments; “each community [develops] a distinctive multi-sector approach with a substantial partnership role for local officials” (Our Affiliates, ¶ 2).

Each state that joins the network uses a three pronged approach (local leadership development, strategic communications, and public engagement) to positively impact the community where it is operating, and encourage immigrants to “integrate into the social fabric of their adopted hometowns” (Welcoming America, ¶ 1).

From the three examples, Welcoming America was the only one which proved to have a strong emphasis on strategic communication, an important element shown by the literature review.

These three examples shed light on the varied types of multi-sector partnerships for development and multiplicity of approaches that can be taken to address a particular social issue. However they all share the understanding that together they are stronger and have a better chance at having a positive effect on the situation they are trying to correct, hence their emphasis on collaborating with different entities, industries and sectors.

Costa Rica's Social Condition

As a Costa Rican studying in the United States the researcher had a particular interest in developing a study that would be relevant to her country. Particularly, it was important to have an approach that would provide insight to the theme of multi-sector partnerships for development, a thriving form of collaboration in Costa Rica. This and Costa Rica's history of prioritizing its social work and investment motivated the study. Even during times of economic hardship, such as World War II when it lost almost 50 percent of its export market, the government chose to invest in social reforms, such as: “[t]he University of Costa Rica was created (1940), a Social Security system was established (1941), Social Guarantees were written into the Constitution (1942), and a Labor Code was enacted (1943)” (Molina and Palmer, 1998, pp. 88-89). The presidential race for the 2010-2014 term was filled with speeches that emphasized the importance of social investment for Costa Rica. The main presidential candidates dedicated whole sections of their political platforms to spell out their proposals to better

the social conditions in the country. (Plan de Gobierno, n.d.; Partido Acción Ciudadana, n.d.)

When the ultimate goal is to eradicate the social problems that threaten Costa Rica's development, it is clear that there is still a considerable amount of work to be done. A report by the Programa Estado de la Nación (2010; State of the Nation Program) about Costa Rica's social condition in 2009 demonstrated a clear interest on behalf of the government to attend to these problem areas. When analyzed in relationship to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the public social spending index in 2009 was 23.4 percent, 3.3 percent higher than the amount registered a year earlier. However, the same report indicated that despite the admirable social spending, the current economic situation is creating a bigger social disparity that even the high levels of social investment cannot reverse. Poverty, limited access to education, unemployment, and the issue of sustainable environment management are still pressing issues in the daily agenda of the Costa Rican government and its citizens.

From Corporate Social Responsibility to Multi-sector Partnerships for Development

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs grew exponentially around the mid 1990s in Costa Rica. Businesses were adopting the worldwide trend and understanding that it was something they had to do, or else their very sustainability as a business could be jeopardized. Initially viewed as a mere requirement to fulfill in order to appease public opinion, CSR is now an intrinsic part of the corporate strategies of local and international companies operating in Costa Rica. It is an investment that contributes to the competitiveness factor of the organizations. (Masís, 2009).

There has been a struggle to define corporate social responsibility in a way that is universally accepted. However, there is a general consensus that the concept covers a company's interaction in five general dimensions: environmental, social, economic, stakeholder and voluntariness dimension. (Dalhsrud, 2008). A company that looks to implement a CSR strategy must take these components into account. Usually the programs have taken the form of donations, sponsorships or volunteering projects, and companies from all industries, sizes, and management styles have implemented successful CSR efforts and have benefited from them.

Nonetheless, it has come to the attention of the directors of said strategies that their companies, alone, do not have the resources and expertise to tackle the problems they have been working on. This has driven them to reach out to other organizations that can (and will) join the cause and work together to bring about change.

For a country the size of Costa Rica, there is an enviable number of organizations working to create successful multi-sector partnerships for development. The government has started to open up more, agreeing to collaborate in situations where its efforts haven't been enough to affect change. Private businesses have stepped out of their bottom-line focused strategies and started to care about the communities and publics they interact with; it is about the money, but also about the people and the environment. And NGOs now have the support of two driving forces in the country, private and public support, in order to put forth a series of projects that have been dormant, waiting for the resources to become available.

It is in this context that multi-sector partnerships in Costa Rica are born to "create value, reduce and manage risks, and strengthen the democracy and governance of

Costa Rica" (Cardona & Sariego, 2010, p.vii). As an example, there are several cases such as the Fundación Omar Dengo (Omar Dengo Foundation) that was partnered with the Ministry of Education to "strengthen the quality of the education and promote modernization of the Costa Rican society"(Programa Nacional de, n.d. ¶ 1, translation by author).This MSPD has reached schools all over the country and has provided them with computer labs where students, and faculty can enhance their knowledge about the use information technologies.

Another example is Fundación Acción Joven (Young Action Foundation), which recognized an untapped source in community services that colleges require for graduation. Generally, a student must comply with a set amount of time between 150 and 300 hours in order to be able to graduate successfully. This Fundación Acción Joven channels that resource of time and human capital and strives to "promote improvements in the quality of public education, utilizing the volunteering projects, with the purpose of endowing young people with opportunities that allow them to fulfill their dreams, and sensitize our society towards a social transformation" (Quiénes somos, n.d., ¶ 1, translation by author)

There are two main organizations that focus on facilitating MSPDs in Costa Rica. One works closely with the private sector, focusing on enriching their CSR strategies and aligning their business and social strategies; it is called Asociación Empresarial para el Desarrollo (AED, Business Association for Development). The other organization is Aliarse, a foundation that describes itself as the "catalyst for public-private interaction" (Misión/Visión/Valores, n.d., ¶ 2, translation by author). Both organizations emphasize strongly the need for development programs to be sustainable

and to operate within the framework of the country's strategy, working in line with the objectives the government has set in the different areas of the social spectrum.

Founded in June of 2007, Aliarse is the result of the joining of several national and international private sector businesses, as well as key public institutions. Members represent diverse industries from technology, tourism, banking and finance, public services, health, food, and transportation, to name a few. Aliarse works specifically to target five main social areas in Costa Rica: education and professional development, public and occupational health, environment, local development, and social responsibility.

For the purpose of this research, Aliarse will be used as the focal point of the study. Its initiatives, as well as the response from all public, private and nonprofit sectors, indicate that its work is successful and of great value to the country. Aliarse has managed to create a basis of knowledge about multi-sector partnerships for development and share it with their members and interested parties; while at the same time orchestrating strategically planned alliances to promote change in particular areas that require attention.

Purpose of the Study

On the one hand, this study aims to identify and analyze the internal communication programs of nonprofit organizations involved in the promotion and development of multi-sector partnerships, which includes the participation of private, public, and civil-society institutions. On the other hand, the study also seeks to uncover and analyze the internal communication efforts within an established multi-sector partnership. It is the intention of the researcher to study the aforementioned communication strategies through a qualitative methodology using the Costa Rican

nonprofit organization Aliarse as an example of this type of organizations. The theoretical perspectives of development communication and the communitarian approach to public relations will be used to conceptualize the study. In particular, the approaches of development communication, such as the concepts of modernization, social marketing, participatory communication and empowerment (Melkote, 2003), will serve as a lens with which to examine the current communication practices of Aliarse. By establishing a comparison between the theoretical foundation and the current communication practices of Aliarse, it will be possible to determine whether the style employed is the best, or whether there is room for improvement.

The study is focusing on internal communication only. This includes the communication from the organization to the member organizations and the communication processes within the multi-sector partnerships that are created thanks to the promotion and coordination Aliarse does. In the same sense, an inward focus to the study means that any outward communication efforts, namely media, community or the like, have not been included in the analysis. Not for a lack of interest or relevance, but simply with intention of focusing on a particular aspect of the communication, before diluting the resources available for this particular research and taking the risk of ending up with inconclusive results.

This particular research will first address the general aspects of multi-sector partnerships for development in the universal setting, and then zoom in on the reality of these alliances in Costa Rica. In the second chapter, the proposed methodology will be discussed and the analysis of results will be presented. A third chapter will make a revision of the relevant existing literature, in hopes of creating a strong framework on

which to build the current research. The presentation of results will take place in the fourth chapter, focusing on the relationship between the research questions proposed and the results found by the researcher. The fifth, and final chapter will discuss what the results say about the management of communications processes and the relevance to Aliarse. It will also present the main conclusions, as well as limitations experience in this study, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will address the different theoretical frameworks that will serve in the analysis of the communication processes of Aliarse. Each section covers a particular theory that is relevant to multi-sector partnerships for development and the management of communications within them.

The Communitarian Approach of Public Relations

The first theoretical approach that concerns the development of this research has to do with the communitarian approach of public relations. There has never been any uncertainty regarding the social and interactive nature of public relations; however, there is some discussion regarding the way to go about establishing relationships with different publics. This section will present the different arguments for the use of the construct “communities” and how this is a more appropriate and accurate way of viewing, and relating to, those groups of people that affect and are affected by the work of the organizations public relations practitioners represent.

It is important before going any further into the relationship between communities and public relations that we create a clear definition of what is meant by a community. Hallahan (2004) made an initial distinction between geographic communities and symbolic communities. The first refers to a more traditional understanding of the word community; it includes those groups of people that are in close, physical proximity to the organization’s physical location. The symbolic communities, however, would be composed of groups which have a connection to the organization at some level, other than physical. In this category you would include those people with financial, emotional, ideological, or political ties to the organization. Since the term community is

commonplace in public relations discourse, there is a tendency to interpret the concept as a geographic community and suppose that some of the other groups of people are part of that geographic community as well. These types of assumptions are dangerous as they could lead to misinterpretations and result in the unintended neglect of some groups, hence, the importance of clearly establishing the difference and stating what is meant by community in each case.

The Chicago School of thought, presented by Kruckeberg and Starck (1988), put forward a set of ideas about how a community is composed by arguing, among other things, that people in a community occupy an identifiable geographic location, develop a particular culture, and that individuals participate in the common life of the community and are “aware of and interested in the common ends, and regulate activity in view of those ends” (p. 56).

Note that up to this point we have not used the word ‘public’ to refer to groups of people that public relations aims to engage with. A strong distinction is made between the traditional concept of ‘publics’ and communities. “The theoretical argument is that community is a broader and richer concept compared to publics, the accepted focus of most public relations theory-building,” Hallahan explained (2004, p. 234). Despite the murkiness of its definition, it does a better job at portraying the essence and diversity of public relations practice.

The term “publics” has become a wild card that public relations practitioners use to refer to a multiplicity of concepts. Depending on the context, it can refer to “communities, audiences, markets, and segments” (Hallahan, 2004, p. 243), and it can be as general or as specific as the author wants it to be. In a time when interest groups

can be exceptionally specific in terms of their characteristics, needs and wants, the use of a generic term like public presents strong disadvantages.

Another restriction about the use of ‘publics’ has to do with the fact that the construction of a public is done by the organization or the professional’s perception of a particular group of people (Hallahan, 2004). As a one-sided description, it assumes that individuals grouped under one category are connected to one another by their sharing of a particular interest or quality, when in real life, this is not the case.

Community, on the other hand, is a concept that can be used to define “any group that shares common interests, developed through common experience” (Hallahan, 2004, p. 243). This already establishes a pre-existing link between the members of a group since what has brought them together is a shared experience, as opposed to a shared characteristic. People come together to form a community out of a desire to belong, and they exist without any regard for a particular organization or problem. Communities are self-identifying and develop independent of the fact that any external force acknowledges them or not (Hallahan, 2004).

Public relations has much to offer in the development of communities. Not only that, but the practice itself could benefit greatly from a stronger emphasis on communitarian public relations, as opposed to the traditional client-focused practice. Hallahan (2004) argued that using community in the exercise of public relations was relevant on two levels: First, “at the pragmatic level, a focus on community links public relations to a widely accepted and valued idea in society – a concept that is receiving continuing attention in academe” (p. 264); and secondly, from a theoretical standpoint, “community is a rich and versatile construct, and therefore more useful construct than

public – a concept that severely constricts theorizing and defies application in public relations” (p. 264). Community is a concept that everyone can relate to, people want to be a part of a community. As such, the idea of communitarian public relations makes sense pragmatically in this sense too as it “links the field to an idea and an ideal that is widely accepted in the everyday world” (p. 237).

Scholars have argued that the practice of public relations could greatly benefit from an emphasis on community and community development (Hallahan, 2004; Kruckeberg & Starck, 1988; Leeper, 1996). Currently, community relations is one of the most important and commonly practiced areas of public relations and there is evidence to show that it will only become a bigger trend in business (Kruckeberg & Starck, 1988; Leeper, 1996). While this growing interest about communities was triggered by the need to comply with government regulations (Leeper, 1996), every day more and more organizations realize the importance of engaging with different communities. Additionally, people are expecting organizations to develop and act upon a heightened sense of social responsibility (Kruckeberg & Starck, 1988); this adds pressure on the organizations' top management who are faced with the decision of responding to the requests or ignoring them, at the risk of it negatively affecting the organization. In their position as counsel to top management, it is public relation's duty to foster that relationship with communities and make it a beneficial one for both the organization and the community members.

Kruckeberg and Starck (1988) were avid proponents of the communitarian approach to public relations. They believe that “public relations is better defined and practiced as the active attempt to restore and maintain a sense of community. Only with

this goal as a primary objective can public relations become a full partner in the information and communication milieu that forms the lifeblood of U.S. society and, to a growing extent, the world" (p. xi). This means that public relations has a double obligation of serving the organization's goals, but also "society at large" (Kruckeberg & Starck, 1994, p. xii), while also keeping in mind that every community is part of a larger community called society and humankind. Leeper (1996) suggested that guided by this argument, the relationship between community and organization is not one of simple dependence but interdependence. This means that there is an understanding of how ones actions affect the other, thus encouraging the cultivation of that which is in the best interest of both parts.

The adoption of a communitarian attitude towards public relations pushes organizations and practitioners to move out of a relationship framework where the organization is doing something to the audiences, but instead understands that the relationship is a "complex, multiflow process" (Kruckeberg & Starck, 1994) with the potential to create and further a sense of community. It should be a program designed to encourage and preserve a healthy environment in which organizations and communities benefit from one another. This would mean that it is not a reaction but a conscious decision on behalf of the organization that is acted out through a strategic and well thought out plan.

Hallahan (2004) identified three different ways of approaching community building, he named them community involvement, community nurturing, and community organizing. Each one interacts with the community on different levels and produces varying degrees of engagement between organization and community members. These

connect directly to the multi-sector partnerships by providing a platform to start off from when designing the best approach to engage with a particular community. In the same sense, there is also a connection to the theory of participatory communication, which I will discuss later on.

Community involvement is the first level. The role of public relations is to execute the “traditional boundary-spanning task performed by community relations specialists” (p. 260). In this case public relations practitioners work towards involving the organization in already existing communities, and carrying out socially responsible actions as well as engaging in open communication with the community members to inform them about the organization’s operations and actions. It is important that during this stage, the community and organization engage in honest and ethical dialogues in order to learn and understand the expectations and hesitations each party may have about the relationship (Hallahan, 2004).

The second level, community nurturing, “involves fostering the economic, political, social, and cultural vitality of communities in which people and organizations or causes are members” (p. 261). This stage deals with a more active and intentional involvement in the community, in this case the organization is taking the initiative on projects that will advance the community’s goals. The role of public relations experts in this case is to act as facilitators, generating the content, and coordinating the different events and activities that the organization is putting on for the community (Hallahan, 2004).

Finally, the community organizing level deals with the creation of communities. It is a grassroots movement that looks to bring together people who share common goals

and interests. This community building effort has a high social interest factor, “[t]o the extent that this approach is rooted in social problems, community organizing resembles the formation of a public or a social movement” (Hallahan, 2004, p. 261). Public relations practitioners act as advocates and recruiters, bringing people together and coordinating the creating of a unified community under a shared goal.

By engaging in the development and execution of a community relations program, organizations are encouraging the goodwill of community members (Kruckeberg & Starck, 1994). This will establish a mutual trust base for the development of relationships and ensure a collaborative climate amongst parties. It is important that, even though the focus of the community relations program is nonprofit, the success or failure of the program will impact the organization financially and potentially harm its reputation (Kruckeberg & Starck, 1994). This is to say, that organizations should not take these programs lightly, it is not just something else that needs to be done because of a trend; it is the public relations specialist’s responsibility to educate top management and secure their commitment to the program. This idea was also discussed by Leeper (1996) as she argued that stewardship, in terms of the relationship maintenance, was something that organizations were moving towards. Businesses are attempting to act more responsibly by, not only engaging with their communities, but also looking after the quality of their products and the adoption of social responsibility as part of their business model. This makes for an integral approach to communitarian public relations.

Communication in Development

The importance of awarding communication processes its due value in development programs has been an accepted fact since the early 1980s. Similarly, culture is considered to be a determining factor in the creation of successful

development programs. Servaes (1999) said that both have a “fundamental impact on the entire question of development” and, to some scholars and policymakers, the inclusion of these components is even an ethical decision (p. 3).

What has not yet become an uncontested principle is the way to go about including communication and culture into the development strategies that are created to address particular social issues. There are as many types of theories or paradigms proposed as there are needs to be covered; however, there has been a consistent evolution of the field that is focusing more towards the creation and use of participatory and community-based strategies, as opposed to a top-down, magic bullet-like style of managing development programs. All the models proposed consider communication to be an indispensable part of the strategy; nonetheless, one of the biggest criticisms has been the fact that sometimes communication is too important and other factors are not addressed adequately. “The socioeconomic structures, material resources, inadequate infrastructure, over centralized bureaucracies, lack of political will, the transnational invasion, arm-twisting by financial and aid organizations” are all important components of the development process, but are often overlooked because too much attention is put on the communication aspect (Kumar, 1994, pp. 76-77).

One of the main issues in development is the fact that there is no universally accepted definition for the term ‘development.’ This has been a cause for the many disputes over the preferred or most effective theories and styles adopted over time. About this, Melkote (2003) stated, “[t]hough most would agree that development means improving the living conditions of society, there has been much debate on just what constitute improved living conditions and how they should be achieved” (p. 129).

One of the tasks that the present research has at hand is that of defining the key concepts and theories that will frame the analysis of the communication practices in multi-sector partnerships for development. The exercise of explicating theories, concepts, and methodologies in development communication presents unique challenges, and as such, the researcher will attempt to create as clear a definition as possible.

Possibly the first caveat, is the assumption that one theory or paradigm will trump another, “[p]aradigms in the social sciences build on one another rather than break fundamentally with previous theories” (Servaes, 1999, p. 8). Despite the diversity in proposed methodologies or theories, most of them will ally with either a modernization or post-modernization starting point. This means that they will share basic assumptions in their approach to development and the role of communications, but will differ slightly and create improvements according to specific circumstances. Servaes (1999) argued that the different approaches to development are not theories, but rather paradigms that will provide instructions and guidance in the creation and execution of development programs. For the purpose of this research, the differentiation between paradigms and theories is irrelevant as both concepts attempt to establish an outline with which to interpret the idea of development and communication within development programs.

There has been much discussion around the creation of a ‘right’ type of approach to development, and this has led to the fact that little has been agreed upon. Nonetheless, the two main things that most practitioners, experts and scholars agree on are: 1) There needs to be a transition from analysis and description of situations, to the actual proposition of solutions to the problems, enough talking; and 2) there are no

“valid blueprints” for development” (Servaes, 1999, p. 3). The one-size-fits-all approach, although used widely during the 1960s, has proven to be ineffective.

Modernization Paradigm

As mentioned before, there are two main perspectives that guide the development programs and, in turn, the way communication is viewed and used. The first one, because historically it appeared first, is the modernization paradigm. Development thinkers and scholars during the late 1940s and 1950s came to the conclusion that underdevelopment in certain countries, particularly those in the Third World, was due to a lack of ‘modernization’ (Gandersonas, 2002; Melkote, 2003; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Servaes, 1999; Kumar, 1994). This meant, that their backwardness was caused by a lack of technological and industrial growth; a problem that could be easily solved by transplanting the ways of the West into these settings, with no regard for their own circumstances or own development processes (Kumar, 1994). Development experts considered the religious and cultural identity of the underdeveloped countries to be hindrances to the growth of these social groups. The focus of modernization theory was on the economic aspects of the community or nation was attempting to ‘help’; gross national product (GNP), literacy, urbanization, and the industrial base were considered the measure of a country’s development. “This mainly economic-oriented view, characterized by endogenism and evolutionism, ultimately resulted in the modernization and growth theory” and thus set the standard for the implementation of the Western mechanisms as a solution to underdevelopment (Servaes, 1999, p. 5).

Modernization proposes development by way of relying on the methods and resources that others, namely the Western countries, have successfully implemented in their environments. This has translated into “transfers of capital, ideology, technology

and know-how”, with no consideration for what the circumstances may be like in the area where the program is being executed (Servaes, 1999, p.20). There is little to no regard towards the idiosyncrasy of the people, or their realities. Their ethnic identity, their heritage, and their history are irrelevant, since for the modernists that identity has caused the underdevelopment and, as such, needs to be eradicated to make room for the truly effective modern ways. There was an assumption that the strategies would work successfully in all types of cultures or situations. However, the sense of urgency to solve the Third World’s problems was prioritized over the importance of creating adequate solutions, thus producing overly simplistic and ineffective programs (Casmir, 1991; Kumar, 1994).

Communication in the modernization approach had a particular and specific role. Melkote (2003) described it as “a complex system, fulfilling certain social functions,” with the end purpose of establishing a new set of beliefs focused on economic and quantitative measures of success (p. 133). The model of communication within the paradigm of modernization has to do with a “one-way, non-participatory communication models with the objective of encouraging the industrialization and economic growth synonymous with the model of development that prevailed in the 1950s” (Gandelsonas, 2002, pp. 2-3). The mass media exposure was expected to strengthen literacy and, in so doing, increase political participation and economic revival. There was great pressure on the media to change the attitudes and behaviors of the people, in order to transform the economic reality of their country (Kumar, 1994).

It has been claimed that modernization had no intention of actually including the participation of the underdeveloped. However, Thomas (1994) suggested that

modernization theories did anticipate some sort of participation, and that this was allowed with the purpose of creating an informed voting population. “The common peoples of the developing countries were expected to be capable of only limited participation in democratic governance for the fear of political destabilization” (p. 63). This shows how participation was never intended to be direct or even seriously considered for the decision-making process. Therefore, people were encouraged to participate in certain type of activities, but only as a representation of their involvement, since the solutions to their problems and the major decisions had already been made for them (Thomas, 1994; Melkote, 2003). About this, Thomas (1994) described it as people being treated as “passive receivers of this body of knowledge. It was not their knowledge, but a knowledge that was exogenous and only vaguely related, if at all, to their reality” (p. 51). Deshler and Sock (1985 as cited by White, 1994) described two levels of participation when it came to communication processes. Their first level was named pseudo-participation and it was divided into two other sub-categories called domestication and ‘assistencialism.’ These types of participation were based on the sharing of information, manipulation, and some level of consultation. However, White (1994) argued that when the control of the development process is not in the hands of those being helped, then it cannot be called participation, “[h]ere, the level of participation of the people is that of being present to listen to what is being planned for them and what would be done unto them – this is definitely non participatory” (p. 17).

There was an expectation that modernization would reach all spheres of society by the ‘trickle down’ effect. That eventually, the change and progress manifest in certain areas, would reach the rest of society and the new behaviors and attitudes would be

adopted by everyone. However, this was not the case. The popularity of the modernization paradigm slowly declined once the effects of it were manifest. By the end of the 1960s and mid 1970s, the “evaluation reports of extension programs in the nonaligned world indicated that the consequences of modernization had been disastrous” (Kumar, 1994, p. 83). Evidence showed that the groups benefitting from the programs were the local elites, the international companies involved in the development of the Third World countries, and financing institutions, like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which had been involved since the beginning providing the capital transfers and loans. Not only were the elite being benefitted the most from the modernization approach, but also the trickle-down effect that was expected never happened. The media was supposed to act as a channel for the diffusion of information; however, the higher classes were the only ones with access to the mass media and, therefore, the messages of progress and adoption of new ideas never reached the lower classes (Kumar, 1994).

Not only was the modernization paradigm facilitating the enriching of the higher classes, but also the groups in society that had originated the development programs were poorer and more in need than before. The increasing levels of poverty in these countries were caused, partly, due to a massive migration that took people out of their rural settings and brought them out into overpopulated urban areas with promises of industrialized and developed jobs that never existed. To make matters worse, the communities ended up in more detrimental conditions than before the irruption by the development experts. Additionally, the people were left to their own devices and had to

pick up the pieces of a broken system that had been completely ineffective, while the specialists went back to their developed countries (Kumar, 1994; Gandelsonas, 2002).

This evident disconnection between what had been expected and the reality experienced, triggered a series of questionings and criticisms of the modernization model. Not only that, but also there was a generalized disapproval for the model's disregard for the local culture and religion, as well as the imposition of its own patriarchal values on the people with which they worked. Melkote (2002) was explicit in his portrayal of the mainstream view within modernization; he said "cultural traditions had to be destroyed if the Third World nations and peoples wanted to modernize" and this is exactly what happened (p. 132). Casmir (1991) also commented on the nature of modernization and how the true colors of the experts came to show once the programs were on their way, "[c]orruption, greed, power, and striving for power may not be factors we like to acknowledge or have publicly exposed, but, unfortunately, they have appeared in conjunction with almost all human efforts which promised worthwhile rewards or status" (p. 6).

As it was mentioned before, theories and paradigms in the social sciences grow and evolve from each other. When one is created it does not mean it will trump the previous one. The criticism and disapproval that modernization was subjected to resulted in the development of two main new paradigms. They still shared a significant portion of the modernization beliefs, but attempted to improve it in some way.

Diffusion of innovations theory

Diffusion of innovations theory is the first step in the direction of a more participatory approach to the development programs and the inclusion of the community members in their social change process. Everett Rogers is credited with the conception

of this paradigm, and he defined an innovation as an idea, practice or object perceived as new by a person or a group of people (Kumar, 1994).

This theoretical design placed a high value on quantitative measures for success, similar to that of the traditional modernization approach. Additionally, the media played an even bigger role in the renovation of people's attitudes towards the new technologies and industrialization of society. The participation in the communication process was still viewed as an imposition, a one-way stream of information aimed at the undeveloped audiences that needed to be introduced to a new way of living. There is even an argument to state that the diffusion of innovations theory was the maximum expression of the one-way, persuasion model for modernization (Servaes, 1999).

Dependency paradigm

Another one of the paradigms that surfaced as a response to the criticism of the modernization approach was the dependency paradigm. There seem to be two main actors that influenced the establishment of the dependency paradigm, one was the work of Paul Baran and André Gunder Frank (Kumar, 1994) and the other one proposes the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) as an influential character in the process (Servaes, 1999).

Self reliance is the overarching concept in the dependency paradigm. According to Servaes (1999), this model put forward the idea that the problems of underdevelopment were not caused by internal factors such as shortage of capital, but by external obstacles. Therefore, the solution to the problem was to separate itself from "the world market and opt for a self-reliant development strategy" (p. 34).

There was an important problem with this paradigm that made it equally as criticized as the modernization approach. It promoted self reliance through

industrialization and import substitution under foreign investment. This only resulted in greater, not lesser, dependence on the peripheral countries and their industries; additionally underdevelopment was only heightened and the countries were submersed in a deepening economic debt situation (Kumar, 1994).

Additionally, the Latin American dependency paradigm followers, named the *dependistas*, are accused of taking for granted the connection between the Westernized messages and ideology, and the consumption culture that was inherently transmitted through them. This truncated the self-reliance message preached by the model, and strengthened the idea of the Western lifestyle and culture being better than their own local identities (Servaes, 1999).

Participatory Communication Theory

Also referred to as the multiplicity paradigm, the two-way communication approach, another development, culturalist, or the public-oriented communication model (Kumar, 1994; Servaes, 1991; Servaes, 1999; Thomas, 1994; White, 1994); this theoretical framework is the most recent and more widely accepted conceptualization for the development of Third World regions and people groups. Paulo Freire was one of the main proponents of this theory. He advocated for a fair and equal treatment of all people, and called upon everyone to treat other people with respect (Freire, 1970).

The participatory paradigm, as its name suggests, focuses on the involvement and active participation of the beneficiary groups in the process of creation and implementation of the development programs. “The participatory model sees people as the nucleus of development. Development means lifting up the spirits of a local community to take pride in its own culture, intellect, and environment”, and therefore it stresses the participation at all levels: individual, local, national, and international

(Servaes, 1991, p. 93). Jamieson (1991) argued that the participatory theory must strive to constantly advance from theory to practice, in order to achieve its maximum potential; this can only be accomplished by staying true to the source of the participation: the people. “[D]evelopment is not a linear process” (Servaes, 1991, p. 67) neither is it a universal model that can be replicated freely, as such, every case and program needs to develop its own definition of what development looks like for their particular realities.

This focus of development in which the people are considered the source of information and transformation is not easy to achieve. Neither are these types of programs predictable or easy to administer. Similarly, they are not popular with the local dominating social and economic classes. Strong opposition from these groups is not rare; after all, the model is proposing to re-distribute the power that has been in the hands of a few, into the hands of many. However, the results that true participation and an accomplished democracy offer are surely liberating (White et al., 1994; Servaes, 1999).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defined participatory communication as access, participation, and self-management. Access refers to the opportunity to get information and also offer feedback on the content of said media outlets. Participation was defined as the involvement of the public in the communication processes (i.e. planning, management, and production). And the final component, self-management represents the maximum form of involvement, as it requires the public to be part of the decision-making process in the communication industry and policy making (Servaes, 1999; “Community communications the,” 1981). The inclusion of the local members in every step of the process for development

guarantees that the solutions proposed will be relevant to the reality the community experiences. Jamieson (1991) said that when true participation occurs this assures that the “local perceptions, attitudes, values, and knowledge are taken into account as soon and as fully as possible” (p. 32). He also argued that the participatory model for development must strive to address and solve the problems that are affecting the people currently, “instead of seeking to impose new and allegedly superior systems” (p. 33).

As far as the use of communication within this model, other than the emphasis in participation as its name suggests, there is a strong focus on the receiving end of the communication process. The quality of the communication will depend greatly on the amount and quality of feedback that the audiences provide, hence the prominence of the two-way and reciprocal communication models (Jamieson, 1991). By turning the attention from the sender to the receiver, there is a shift from creating “a need for the information one is disseminating [to] disseminating information for which there is a need” (Servaes, 1999, p. 89). The multiplicity of factors that are considered for the development of these programs results in more diverse goals and tactics, thus creating tailored strategies. This allows for a more effective form of communication, rather than a massive media exposure to generic messages and ideas, it is communication among equals (Thomas, 1994).

As it was mentioned before, White (1994) talked about Deshler and Sock's (1985) proposed two levels of participation. The modernization approach uses pseudo-participation and the participatory paradigm aims to use genuine participation in its communication processes. Genuine participation has been subdivided into two

categories named cooperation and citizen control; the former makes reference to partnership and delegation of power, and the latter refers to empowerment of the citizens. For there to exist genuine participation, collaboration between the local elite and the people needs to take place. Only under these circumstances will it be possible to establish a decision-making process that will empower the citizens, and allow them to develop effective solutions (White, 1994). Additionally, Melkote (2003) posited that participation should encourage citizens to become involved politically and socially; it should bring in those people that were pushed to the sidelines by the modernization approach and allow them to share their insights on their realities, their needs, and collaborate in the decision-making process. This is what he named Participatory Action Research (PAR), an area within the participatory communication paradigm that stresses the need to produce “endogenous participatory social action” through the people’s awareness of their situations (p. 139).

The transition towards a more egalitarian and inclusive way of fostering development has not been easy. However, the results speak for themselves, slowly but surely bureaucrats, academics and practitioners have increasingly become more aware of the importance of a participatory approach. An honest concern, respect and consideration of the culture and local identities of the communities where these programs are carried out has allowed for better results (White, 1994).

Participatory communication is not intended to be a panacea for the social problems in a community or country. It is conceived as a long-term approach that will attempt to resolve some of the bigger problems; however, this does not mean that short-term solutions should not be implemented to address the more pressing issues

that might exist. In the same way, there must be an intentional consideration for the price that participatory communication has for the members of the underdeveloped communities. For them to take part in the decision-making processes, they need to take time from their work. An ethical undertaking of this paradigm will honor this effort by making the process as time-effective as possible (Thomas, 19994; White, 1994).

Multi-Sector Partnerships

As I mentioned earlier, multi-sector partnerships are quickly becoming a widely accepted, and encouraged, practice for those organizations in the public and private sector that are looking to get involved in the social issues of their countries.

In this section, it is the aim of the researcher to go into more detail about how these partnerships came to be, how they have changed throughout time, what are the best practices when running a multi-sector partnership for development (MSPD), and how public relations contributes to the growth of these forms of collaboration.

Antecedent Factors for Multi-sector Partnerships

The model of partnering across sectors is not new. Sagawa and Segal (2000) mentioned that in the 1970s and 1980s these partnerships were mostly directed towards education, cultural, or environmental causes located where organizations operated. These were relationships that were taking philanthropy a step further, going from the act of writing a check to engaging in a program that would satisfy a social objective and contribute towards the business' needs.

Nonetheless, the relationship between organizations form opposing sectors is not always a positive one, at least not from the beginning; “[w]here once the two sectors were worlds apart, with contact between them at best an unequal relationship of philanthropist and charity and at worst one of political adversaries, many businesses

and social sector organizations are rethinking how they interact" (Sagawa & Segal, 2000, p. 106). Born out of the necessity to find new ways to meet their own business needs, the private sector is discovering that partnering with organizations from other sectors opens up an infinite number of opportunities to collaborate and grow.

Looking at the situation from the social sector's perspective, governments are finding it harder and harder to meet the needs of their most vulnerable populations, or even tackle the social problems of their countries. The social sector is aware of this situation and, therefore, has been taking over the responsibility and serving more people with much better results than they have in the past (Sagawa & Segal, 2000). However this poses a threat, since with more awareness more organizations are born to intervene and contribute to the resolution of problems, therefore, funds and donations are spread thin across the spectrum. A survey conducted at the end of 2010 showed that Americans, due to a strenuous economical situation, were donating less money and time to their charities of choice (Flandez, 2010). Despite their desires to contribute and help others, they were prioritizing their own economic necessities over their contributions.

The demands that come from operating in a sector in which resources are scarce and the needs are plentiful requires that organizations reach out to varied tactics for generating income. It is now common to see NGOs launching clothing collections, charging fees for membership or for their services, "engaging in the marketplace [...] and adopting market-savvy approaches" that used to be typical of the business sector (Sagawa & Segal, 2000, p. 112). In the same way, society has become aware that the private sector has resources available that could help alleviate the social problems, and

are therefore, demanding greater accountability from businesses. Corporate social responsibility stems from a social and government based pressure upon the private sector, demanding that they give back and get involved in the social issues in their communities (Leeper, 1996).

More and more now, the lines “that once defined precise roles for the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors have blurred, and threaten to break down all together” (Sagawa & Segal, 2000, p.112). Therefore, in light of this tendency from both sectors to gravitate into each others’ area of expertise, is that multi-sector partnerships are created: to maximize what each partner has to offer, in order to achieve a common goal.

However, Austin and SEKN (2004) painted a much different picture when it comes to the reality in Latin America. In this case, the history of partnerships between organizations from different sectors is very government focused. Historically, governments and churches have taken on the burden of providing the social services to their citizens (Molleda, 2001), while businesses are expected to care for their business, and nothing more. Despite the fact that research has demonstrated that the social-focused partnerships in Latin America are growing strong, “in many countries the business sector has been looked on with suspicion and concern about self-interest and exploitation rather than as sources of beneficence and caring about the well being of the larger community” (Austin & SEKN, 2004, p. 6).

With time, and as some of these partnerships receive increased attention from the beneficiary communities and the media, the population has been able to recognize their contributions. Additionally, acceptance is growing towards the fact that the social issues that the nation is dealing with, are far too large for a single entity to take on.

Governments are privatizing branches of their social services, and relying on third parties to take on the task; and market forces are not supplying enough jobs to cover for the social problems. The evidence for something or someone larger to step in and take control is becoming unavoidable (“Alianzas para el”, n.d.; Cardona & Sariego, 2010; Austin & SEKN, 2004).

The ‘How to’ of Multi-Sector Partnerships

Creating a partnership requires a careful and closely monitored process in order to guarantee a successful process of partner and methodology selection. It has been agreed that partnerships are a way for organizations to expand beyond their own capabilities and work towards a shared strategic goal (Sagawa & Segal, 2000; Varadarajan & Cunningham, 1995).

However, even when there is a common objective as the overarching purpose for the creation of a partnership, there needs to be a process during which all partners get to know each other. The fact that they are interested in addressing the same issue does not negate the fact that their organizational identities are different; as such there is a likelihood that there are conflicting ideas of how to approach their shared goal (Linden, 2002). Businesses most likely will want to focus on the value adding capacity of the partnership, while nonprofit sector partners will want the private sector counterparts to jump on board with the organization’s mission and work towards furthering it (Sagawa & Segal, 2000). Austin (2000) pointed out the importance that “a partnership be viewed as a relationship rather than a deal. Like any valued relationship, a collaborative alliance prospers to the degree that the partners invest in it” (p. 121). The success of the partnership relies on how well the members relate to one another, whether they can trust each other, and their abilities to accept and embrace each others’ strengths and

differences. Developing a strong relationship between all members of the partnership is a crucial factor in securing a smooth process in the execution of the programs, as well as preparation for times of struggle (Austin, Reficco & SEKN, 2004; Linden, 2002).

Austin (2000) put forward a set of seven principles to guide a successful partnership, he called it the Seven C's of strategic collaboration. The first element is *connection* with both the people that make up the partnership, but also with the purpose for which the partnership is created. Linden (2000) went so far as to state that if there is no shared purpose, then there is no reason to collaborate at all. It is important that not only top-level management is connected to the partnership, but also member organizations must work to involve and engage their employees with the cause the partnership is contributing to. About this, Austin (2000) mentioned that “[c]reating opportunities for interaction and service engagement by employees at all levels in both organizations fosters personal relationships and connection with the cause” (p. 174). The ability for a partnership to reach its full potential relies on the ability of the members to bolster commitment to “permeate the whole organizational pyramid” (Austin et al., 2000, p.157)

The second element is *clarity* of the purpose for which the partnership is being created. One of the main contributions that private sector members bring to the table is their business-minded focus on discipline and rigor (Austin, 2000), this will allow for a strict and well targeted effort in the design and execution stages. All of the member organizations must forgo their self-centered mentalities in order to adopt a group-centered focus. Sagawa and Segal (2000) warned about a potential risk in this ‘we’ minded approach. They emphasized that, because organizations are working together,

it does not imply that they should abandon or alter their original and central missions. Rather than risking their own survival by trying to enter a field that is new to them – commercialization of products in the case of nonprofits, or putting social change before profit making – “the key is for businesses and social sector organizations alike to strike the right balance as they move in these new directions” (p. 114).

Third on the list is *congruency* of the mission, strategy, and values that the partnership is promoting. In order to develop a strong foundation that will keep the partnership safe and strong during times of uncertainty or crisis, partner organizations must be closely aligned with each other in terms of their purpose as a partnership and the strategies that will be employed (Austin, 2000).

Creation of value comes fourth on Austin’s list. As mentioned before, partnerships are born from a realization that a single entity lacks the resources and capabilities to tackle an issue on its own; therefore, by coming together, partnering organizations are seeking to bolster their strengths and achieve their shared goals. Austin (2000) argued that the largest creation of value comes about when “the organization’s capabilities and resources are deployed to produce benefits that cannot be obtained from any other alliance” (p. 178). By producing unique results, the partnership is proving its unique significance.

As the fifth element, Austin (2000) placed a great deal of importance on *communication* between partners. We are dedicating a specific section to this, so for now we shall say that good relationships between partners, a strategic fit and an effective strategy for the creation of value are all good, but without a solid

communication process running across the partnership the risk of failure increases dramatically.

Continuous learning comes in sixth on the list. Although there is a strong emphasis on planning and preparation, partnerships are dynamic forms of collaboration. As such, partners should embrace this and adopt flexibility as one of their own values. Additionally, learning from the other partners is an effective way of creating rapport, strengthening the communication lines, and expanding the possibilities for future collaboration opportunities (Sagawa & Segal, 2000; Austin, 2000). Osbourne and Gaebler (1992) and Drucker (1989) stated that both profit and nonprofit sectors have much to learn from each other. Businesses can learn to be more mission-driven, learn to motivate their staff and volunteers more, and learn to hold their CEOs accountable for what they do. In the same respect, nonprofits could learn from businesses how to be more competitive, more customer-driven, and more results and market-oriented. This is the basis for the idea of feeding off of each other's strengths. Partnerships are meant to benefit the members, at the same time that it tackles social issues.

Finally, the seventh and last element in the list is *commitment*; in this case it refers to a commitment to the partnership that is being created. It is important that members understand that partnerships are intended to be long-term, and that there is an emphasis on slowly integrating the business format and strategies with the newly created partnership. Austin et al. (2004) also pointed to the importance of a committed set of members by stating that “[f]ocused attention on the part of the leaders capable of making decisions, allocating resources, and committing their organizations to the partnership, is a vital input for its successful management (p. 153).

Communication in a Multi-Sector Partnership

In the revision of the existing literature on multi-sector partnerships, the theme of communication and the importance of maintaining open lines of communication between partners came up consistently. Additionally, this being a research focusing on communications, more specifically public relations, it is important to take a moment to understand how the use of communications plays a vital role in the development and success of multi-sector partnerships.

As the starting premise, collaboration cannot exist without communication (Austin et al., 2004). Therefore the question is not about whether or not communication is necessary – that has been established – but more about how to use communication to benefit the partnership and to promote its programs. Additionally, relationships thrive when there is a strong foundation that enables partners to trust each other, “trust is the intangible that makes a collaboration cohesive” (Austin, 2000, p. 180).

There is a clear connection to the topics of communitarian public relations and participatory communication. As Molleda, Martinez, and Suarez (2008) explained, this take on communication within multi-sector partnerships “suggests that to achieve broader solutions and improved quality of life it is necessary to capture the experiences of community members, work together toward common goals, and facilitate participation by diverse groups” (p. 106). Both of these guiding theoretical frameworks that have been explored, tie in with multi-sector partnerships and the added value they bring to the execution of these forms of collaboration.

The relationship between the different partnership members will grow stronger as long there are open lines of communication that allow for a sincere exchange of opinions, ideas, and dialogue every step of the way. When members are able to voice

their opinions and communicate their expectations, the relationship strengthens (Austin, 2000; Austin et al., 2004). Along the same lines, communication is vital with other participants involved in the partnerships, “[p]artners must work to develop ongoing and effective communication between themselves among the personnel within each organization, and with outside stakeholders and other about the alliance’s mission, activities, needs, and accomplishments” (Austin, 2000, p. 131). Employees are a valuable component to the execution and success of a partnership. It is imperative that top-level management work towards transmitting the importance of the partnership to all levels of the organization, both profit and nonprofit (Sagawa & Segal, 2000; Austin et al., 2004).

Molleda et al. (2008) discovered the potential for communication in five main areas, very similar to Austin’s (2000) seven C’s. In a case study of Colombia, a country with many cultural similarities to Costa Rica, they found that in multi-sector partnerships, strategic, participatory communication played an important role in furthering and facilitating the partnerships. Communication was found to aid in bridging the gap between sectors, strengthening the alignment by sharing the same goals and beliefs across the board. In the same sense, a clear communication of how the partnership will benefit members and the intended audience, enhances the value granted to the partnership itself. Finally, communication itself is an effective way of making the management of the partnership easier, and of promoting growth and innovation.

A final component of the communications aspect has to do with the representatives from each organization who take active part in running the partnership. Whether organizations choose to delegate this role to an in-house person or outsource

it to a public relations agency or independent consultant, it is of utmost importance that members select a person responsible for representing the organization and handling communications. There are good arguments to support the idea of entrusting each organization's human resources team to handle the relationship, as well as arguments to support the idea of handing that responsibility to a third-party entity. The overarching theme is that someone needs to take care of it and become the accepted representative (Linden, 2002; Austin, 2000; Austin et al., 2004). About this, Austin (2000) argued that:

If an alliance is truly strategic, each organization will have an assigned partner relationship manager. Having such counterparts can enhance coordination in programs and communication, particularly in the joint formulation of a strategy for communicating about the partnership both internally and externally (p. 181).

About Aliarse: A Costa Rican Nonprofit

Created in 2007, Aliarse is a nonprofit organization that stems from an initiative taken by public institutions and private sector businesses. Focused on furthering the sustainable economic development of Costa Rica, these organizations came together after they realized that their single efforts would struggle to reach the desired effects, and that together they could be a strong force for change. The economic, social and environmental realities of Costa Rica were, and still are, less than ideal, therefore they realized that working together they could leverage each other's strengths to bring about change partners ("Somos la alianza", n.d.).

The founding member organizations were already familiar with corporate social responsibility strategies as part of their business plans, these are organizations that have set an example for others in their fields; and have worked to increase their competitiveness in the market, while at the same time contribute to the well-being of

their employees, communities and business partners (“Somos la alianza”, n.d.). Aliarse works to guarantee that the partnerships have the desired impact by systematically bringing together the ideal members to produce an effective multi-sector partnership for the sustainable development of Costa Rica.

In order to guarantee that Aliarse is working in the most effective way possible, they have focused their work on four specific areas: environment, health, education, and local development (Curriculo Institucional, 2011). Additionally, Aliarse is part of certain strategic partnerships itself that strengthen the work the organization does. Among those partnerships a few stand out: United Nation Global Impact, Asociación Empresarial para el Desarrollo (Business Association for Development) which is in turn allied with United Way, and Centrum für Internationale Migration und Entwicklung (Center for International Migration and Development) (“Alianzas Estratégicas”, n.d.; Curriculo Institucional, 2011).

Aliarse’s mission is to promote public-private alliances that will contribute to sustainable development and equality, through the exercise of social responsibility (“Somos la alianza”, n.d.). The organization describes its work as a catalyst to facilitate the collaboration between organizations from different sectors, and they aim to be leaders in Costa Rica in terms of the promotion of multi-sector partnerships that tie back to the country’s development strategies.

An important element of Aliarse’s work has to do with education in the area of multi-sector partnerships for development. Every year the organization offers a series of workshops and training opportunities with the goal of spreading the understanding of this form of collaboration. These workshops are directed at the management level

positions from both public and private organizations, and are all connected to the four areas of focus that Aliarse works with (Programa Formacion Continua, 2011).

The communications aspect of Aliarse is still very new. It produces a digital newsletter – InfoAliarse - that is published annually and it highlights the main projects on which the organization has been working. Additionally the organization manages a website with a substantial amount of information about the Aliarse, its work, current partnerships that are being executed, and educational resources. Of considerable relevance to this study is the fact that Aliarse does not possess a person dedicated exclusively to public relations or communications. The different aspects of communication are divided amongst several staff members, the Executive Director included.

Despite the fact that Aliarse is a fairly small organization, it works with some of the most prominent public and private organizations in the country. From the private sector the founding organizations include Bridgestone, tire manufacturer and distributor; Chiquita, banana growing and commercializing company; Intel, world leader in silicon innovation; Grupo Purdy Motor, exclusive Toyota dealer; Clínica Bíblica Hospital; and Península Papagayo, sustainable tourist development. Similarly, some of the public sector founding members include the Banco de Costa Rica, one of the largest state banks; Grupo ICE, largest electricity, telephone and internet provider in the country; AyA, largest water treatment and provider plant; and Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje (National Learning Institute), supervising entity for the professional training and formation of the country's human resource. Additionally, Aliarse reaches out to other

organizations and invites them to join certain partnerships if said organizations have a history of working in the same are that the created partnership is going to address.

Research Questions

After a thorough examination of the existing literature it is possible to establish a series of research questions. They will guide the investigation to a more focused area of inquiry and allows the researcher to draw more relevant conclusions.

Since the literature review section has been divided into three main sections, the guiding research questions and subsequent proposition have been created using the same format. The communitarian approach of public relations is a key principle in the execution of multi-sector partnerships; however, the literature demonstrated that this style is yet to become the predominant way of practicing public relations. Therefore, the following research question was created:

RQ1: Is Aliarse's communitarian public relations approach best described as community involvement, community nurturing, or community organizing?

Similarly, the section on communication within multi-sector partnerships relied heavily on James Austin's seven Cs of strategic collaboration. Therefore, it was important for the researcher to analyze the extent to which these elements were incorporated into the management of the partnerships. This led to the creation of the second research question and its sub questions.

RQ2: To what extent are the seven Cs of strategic collaboration, namely connection, of purpose, congruency, creation of value, continual learning, commitment, and communication integrated into the management of the partnerships?

Based on the significant quality of the information gathered about Aliarse and its management style, at this point it is safe to establish a proposition that fits within the

theoretical framework of communication in development. The analysis of the data will be either confirm or reject the assumption made.

P1: Aliarse uses predominantly the participatory paradigm over the modernization paradigm to guide the management of its partnerships.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Choosing the right methodology is a vital component in the process to developing high quality and relevant results. For this particular project I have selected a qualitative research approach. Based on the descriptive information that is necessary to answer the research questions proposed, this approach will provide enough information to draw significant conclusions.

The circumstances in which the research is conducted greatly affects the type of approach researchers take for the data collection process. The qualitative approach is used when the purpose of the research deals with one or more of the following aspects: a) understanding the meaning attributed by participants to particular events or actions in their lives, b) understanding the context in which participants act and how that affects their actions, c) discovering influences that had not been anticipated, d) understanding how certain outcomes come to be, and lastly e) developing explanations to justify a certain outcome (Bickman & Rog, 1998). This particular project aims to understand the meaning attributed by participants to the specific partnerships and communication processes connected to those partnerships. At the same time it intends to understand the context in which these partnerships operate and communicate with each other, as well as what influences those communication processes.

By taking an interpretive paradigm as the guideline to qualitative research, it is possible to analyze the reality being studied and understand how the dynamic of multi-sector partnerships, and the interactions happening within them, affects the communication process. This also allows for an active participation of the researcher in the data collection process (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

About the Researcher

As a Costa Rican with hands on experience in the field of public relations in the country, I have dealt with the challenges and opportunities that both private, public and nonprofit sectors pose. I have personally worked with some of the member organizations and with several of the people that represent these organizations.

My ability to engage with the participants in their native language, Spanish, increased the credibility of the study. In the same sense, it eliminated any type of miscommunication due to a language barrier, and guaranteed comfortable and fluid conversation during interviews.

Similarly, my familiarity with the culture and society at large facilitated the analysis of the data, any reference to the national reality that affects the creation or management of the partnerships, was identified and accounted for.

Design

In line with the qualitative approach to the research, a particular organization was selected to function as the focus of the study. Due to the nature of multi-sector partnerships, this methodology allowed for a more in-depth look at the details in the communication processes. In selecting such a narrow approach, the researcher is not pretending to be representative of an entire population, but rather to understand, by taking a much closer look than any other methodology allows, more clearly how multi-sector partnerships tailor the development of communication strategies (Austin & SEKN, 2004).

The researcher selected the Costa Rican nonprofit organization Aliarse as the unit of analysis. Aliarse has positioned itself as a leader in the field, not only facilitating the creation of successful multi-sector partnerships for development, but also producing

informative material to educate others about the value of this form of collaboration, and engaging in specific partnerships itself. Costa Rica is starting to make a transition from a corporate social responsibility (CSR) oriented culture to a more collaborative approach to address the social issues in the country. By joining organizations like Aliarse the larger and more prominent organizations in both the private and public sectors have accepted the fact that they cannot tackle the social issues of Costa Rica alone and, therefore, seek to partner with others to do so. Additionally, the education efforts that Aliarse and other organizations like Asociación Empresarial para el Desarrollo (Business Association for Development), have taught these organizations that their efforts can be maximized when they are executed according to a strategy, as opposed to random acts of kindness (Currículo Institucional, 2011; Conferencias y talleres, n.d.).

With the selection of the organization on which the study was to focus, it was determined that in-depth, one-on-one interviewing was the most effective method to collect the necessary data. This type of approach sets the stage for the researcher to “explore the perspectives and perceptions of various stakeholders and publics” (Daymon & Holloway, 2002, p. 166) by engaging in guided conversation. The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide to make sure that all the aspects related to the investigation’s goals were covered. A semi-structured interview gives the interviewer a framework in which to work, with enough freedom to choose the right way to pursue certain issues. In this sense, based on how the interviewee reacts and responds to certain questions, the interviewer can decide to add questions to follow a lead, or eliminate certain questions that might not apply to the conversation.

The interview guide allowed a flexible format in conversation and it was composed of a series of open ended questions that have stemmed from the research questions and proposition that guided the study. Those research questions were:

RQ1: Is Aliarse's communitarian public relations approach best described as community involvement, community nurturing, or community organizing?

RQ2: To what extent are the seven Cs of strategic collaboration, namely connection, of purpose, congruency, creation of value, continual learning, commitment, and communication integrated into the management of the partnerships?

P1: Aliarse uses predominantly the participatory paradigm over the modernization paradigm to guide the management of its partnerships.

Due to the fact that the sample was composed of both of Aliarse managers and board members, as well as representatives from the founding member organizations and representatives from member organizations, there are two different interview guides (Appendices A and B).

The interview guide for employees of Aliarse (Appendix A) is made up of 16 questions. Questions #1 and #7 through #11 aim to answer RQ1, similarly questions #2, #4, #6, #8 through #10, and #12 through #16 are directed at answering RQ2, finally questions #3, #5, #7, #8 and #14 targets P1. In the case of the interview guide for the representatives from the member organizations (Appendix B) there are only 14 questions. They are divided as follows: questions #1, #5, #7 address RQ1, questions #2, #9 through #11, #13 and #14 relate to RQ2, and questions #4, #6 through #8 and #11 take on P1; additionally questions #3 and #12 are general questions concerning the organization's involvement in the partnerships. In connection to the focus of the study,

there is a significant emphasis on communication-related question when compared to other items in the interview guides. This is also evident in the upcoming chapter that presents the main findings.

Conducting the interviews presented somewhat of a challenge since all of the interviewees are located in Costa Rica; that means that the majority of interviews were done over Skype, and only one of the interviews was done in person.

Sample

Qualitative research rarely strives for a random sampling of participants; rather, participants are chosen based on the purpose of the study (Daymon & Holloway, 2002). Seeing as Aliarse was selected as the focal point of the study, the sample was selected from a group of organizations and individuals connected to it. The organization has six full-time employees, an Administrative Board with five members, and 15 founding member organizations each with between one to three representatives. Additionally, there are several member organizations that have joined Aliarse since its creation. The sample was selected by convenience based on time and distance limitations. Twenty people were selected as the sample; composed from Aliarse managers, administrative board members, representatives of the founding member organizations, and representatives from member organizations; these participants will share their perceptions about the communication processes and strategies of multi-sector partnerships for development.

Table 1 is a description of the sample's demographic information and job descriptions. Confidentiality was maintained as their names were not revealed.

Table 1-1. Sample Demographic

Organization	Type	Description of organization	Number of participants	Sex	Participant's job description
Aliarse	Nonprofit	Intermediary organization	3	2 female 1 male	Manager, director, board member
Banco de Costa Rica	Public Institution	State bank	1	Female	Corporate Social Responsibility Manager
Bridgestone-Firestone	Private company	Tire manufacturing and distribution	1	Female	Corporate and Community Relations
Consejo Consultivo Nacional de Responsabilidad Social Empresarial (CCNRS)	Nonprofit	National council of corporate social responsibility	1	Male	Executive Vicepresident advisor
Consejo de Seguridad Vial (COSEVI)	Public Institution	Coordinator of national road safety	1	Male	Project Director
EcoDesarrollo Península Papagayo	Private company	Sustainable tourism development	1	Female	Community Relations Manager
Grupo Purdy Motor	Private company	Car dealer	1	Male	Corporate Relations Manager
Hospital Clínica Bíblica	Private company	Hospital	1	Male	Social Action Manager
Instituto de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (AyA)	Public institution	Main national water service provider	1	Female	Cooperation and International Affairs Director
Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje (INA)	Public institution	Technical and professional training for adults	1	Male	Advisor to the President

Table 1-1. Continued

Organization	Type	Description of organization	Number of participants	Sex	Participant's job description
Intel	Private company	Microchip manufacturer and distributor	1	Female	Community Relations Regional Manager
Laboratorios Stein	Private company	Medical laboratory	1	Female	Corporate Social Responsibility Coordinator
Ministerio de Salud	Public institution	Health ministry	1	Female	Competitiveness and Environment Program
Riteve	Private company	National automotive technical revision	1	Female	Communications Coordinator
TotalP.E.T.	Private company	Manufacturer of plastic packaging	1	Female	Marketing and Sales Manager

Validity

Qualitative research is usually confronted with the issue of validity. Whether for the size and nature of the sample or the design used to collect data, there are always concerns about how the results from a particular investigation are relatable to other studies. At the same time, the interpretive paradigm emphasizes a strong participation by the researcher and this triggers concerns for the influence of interviewer bias. This research did not intend to eliminate the subjectivity of the researcher, but incorporate it into the analysis through her knowledge of communication and public relations strategy (Bickman & Rog, 1998; Daymon & Holloway, 2002).

As far as external validity is concerned, the variety of the organizations in the sample provides a wide array of public and private organizations in Costa Rica; this

means that the sample is somewhat representative of the public and private sector population and contributes to the validity of the study. Additionally, given the unique nature of multi-sector partnerships for development, it is unrealistic to extrapolate the results from a single investigation; however, it is possible to present an educated model of what communication processes look and work like in those circumstances.

Data Gathering Procedures

In-depth interviews rely heavily on the skills of the interviewer (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Taking notes can distract the interviewer and can also make the participant uncomfortable; additionally, the participant can see what the interviewer considers important or not, jeopardizing the quality of the information that he or she is willing to share. In this sense, for those interviews conducted in person, they were recorded with an audio recorder in order to guarantee the interviewers full attention, and contribute to creating a comfortable, bias-free environment for the participant. In a similar way, the interviews that were carried out using video-conference through Skype were recorded.

Entry and exit strategies were an important part of the research process, as the entire study could be compromised by poor planning of these factors. The initial contact with Aliarse was made through a current representative from one of its founding member organizations, and Aliarse's reaction was overwhelmingly positive since the beginning. The organization shares the same passion for this subject, and believes it is necessary to encourage others to engage in multi-sector partnerships for development.

Building trust is a key factor when conducting qualitative research, particularly with in-depth interviews (Marshall & Goodman, 1999; Daymon & Holloway, 2002). The participants may be hesitant to share their ideas and opinions for fear of repercussions

or judgment from their superiors. It is the researcher's role to stimulate a comfortable and safe environment for the participant and to allow conversation to flow naturally (Creswell & Creswell, 2007). In order to generate this atmosphere of collaboration, Aliarse's Executive Director introduced the researcher to the participants; in this way the interviews had the support of the highest level authority in the organization assuring participants that the organization was endorsing the researcher. Similarly, participants' names and those of their organizations have been kept confidential in the analysis of results; therefore they felt comfortable to share valuable insight without the fear of identification or potential retaliation. Even though the researcher was introduced by the organization's CEO, there was a clear indication of the independence which both the participants and the researcher enjoyed in the study. Participants were assured that their answers would not be reported back to Aliarse, and that the interview guide had been designed exclusively by the researcher.

In terms of exit strategies, once the project was finalized and approved, the researcher presented Aliarse's Executive Director with an executive summary highlighting the main discoveries from the study, and set up a meeting to discuss the project. If the organization so desired, it had the researcher's approval to circulate the executive summary with other member organizations and Administrative Board members.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, there is no numerical analysis of the data; instead the information gathered is prepared so as to allow an easier examination of its content. By reducing the raw data into categories or manageable sections they become less overwhelming for the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2007; Daymon & Holloway,

2002). Interviews were transcribed and analyzed in the search for patterns in the answers provided by participants. This was the most important and challenging part of the data analysis; an adequate identification of the patterns and themes in the data highlighted the important elements expressed by the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). As the interview guides were designed to answer each particular research question and proposition, it was easy to pair interview questions with their corresponding research question, allowing for a more effective analysis.

It was possible to take the analysis a step further by looking at the frequency with which each theme was mentioned. How often or how little a particular subject was mentioned was an indicator of the perception towards that particular theme (Creswell & Creswell, 2007).

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

The data collection process yielded a total of 17 intensive interviews that were conducted over a four-week period. The interviews were conducted using Skype; however, only a portion were done using both video and voice conferencing, the rest had to be conducted using only voice conferencing because of a variety of reasons, including the fact that some participants did not have access to the right equipment at the time of the interview.

Participants included three representatives from Aliarse, five from public sector institutions, eight private sector companies, and one nonprofit organization that oversees the development of social responsibility in Costa Rica and of which Aliarse is a member. The participants were both male and female, eleven were women and six were men, they all occupy manager level positions within their organizations. The following are the most relevant findings drawn from the analysis of the data. The results will be presented in the same order used to introduce the research questions and one proposition in the literature review and methodology section. Verbatim quotations from participants are inserted in the text as illustrations of the main results.

Aliarse's Communitarian Public Relations Approach

The theory reviewed proposed three levels of engagement in the involvement of public relations in programs for social change and development. Those levels ranged from a basic to a more complex participation each one varying depending on the role that public relations adopted. The most basic grade was a boundary spanning role known as community involvement; the next up is community nurturing, this is a role of facilitator and coordinator of partnerships and programs; and finally the third level

places public relations at a community organizing position in which it advocates, recruits, and creates communities with a social interest.

Aliarse was created as a nonprofit that would work at a community organizing level. The organization's founders purposely sought out public and private sector organizations that were leaders in their industry and who also had a record of prioritizing social responsibility in their own operations. They invited these organizations to be a part of a select community that would work towards establishing relevant and strategic partnerships. A representative from Aliarse mentioned, "we wanted organizations that could contribute significantly to the promotion of multi-sector partnerships in the four areas that we had designated as most important: education, health, environment, and community development" (personal communication, December 21, 2011). Each founding organization paid a membership that was used as the initial capital to launch the organization. These are committed public and private sector organizations that, not only, share Aliarse's ideals and values, but also together they crafted the mission, vision and strategic goals for the organization.

They maintain a level of community organizing engagement by participating in a national forum for multi-sector initiatives, particularly in the area of social responsibility. A participant from a national nonprofit even described the role of organizations, such as Aliarse, as an entity with the responsibility of evangelizing on the subject of public-private collaboration. He mentioned that Aliarse has been "a key component in shedding light on the subject of multi-sector partnerships; and in setting the stage to move from the theoretical understanding that a synergy between government and

business is needed, to the establishment a formal social responsibility management figure” (personal communication, February 13, 2012).

Despite their initial focus as a community organizing entity, their mission and vision established their goal to be a “facilitator, promoter, and catalyst” (Aliarse representative, personal communication, December 21, 2012) for multi-sector partnerships for development. This meant that they would be engaged, primarily, at a community nurturing level. With the time and the experience derived from several partnerships already in existence, it is clear to see that Aliarse’s level of involvement in the different partnerships varies depending on the nature of each alliance. Multi-sector partnerships are organic structures, the result of very different organizational cultures that come together to collaborate; naturally this means that each one will be unique in its endeavors and the way they go about merging their identities to work together and maximize their assets.

There is also a variation on the level of involvement depending on the stage the partnership is on, and the members it is participating with. The data showed that when public sector members are involved, Aliarse tends to have a stronger role of community involvement as it enacts the role of mediator between public and private sector members. This particularly is more evident when there are several private sector members and one public sector entity; designating one representative before the public institution makes all the initial bureaucracy much easier to handle, contrary to having multiple actors trying to cut through the red tape. The corporate relations manager from the private sector explained it by saying:

Aliarse's role is fundamental, because they are the face of the partnership. Every once in a while, us from the private sector, would meet with the government but the day to day work is done by Aliarse. They had the responsibility of doing all the negotiating with the government (personal communication, January 25, 2012).

Another benefit from the community involvement level is the cohesiveness that Aliarse gives to the proposal presented to the public sector institutions, allowing for a more credible and open communication. The strength found in the unit that an alliance provides is key to increasing the value the collaboration has. A communications director from the private sector said, "it's not the same to have one single company trying to reach an agreement with a public institution, than having a group of companies who have more leverage" (personal communication, January 25, 2012).

It was also interesting to note that several of the participants from both public and private sectors, but also within Aliarse, expect a level of community involvement to be present. Particularly in the identification of opportunities for collaboration, and in bridging that division between public and private sector to set the stage for a multi-sector partnership.

The community nurturing level has not been absent from Aliarse's work, in fact, it is their most predominant level of engagement. Each multi-sector partnership that Aliarse establishes runs in a semi-autonomous manner. This means that "Aliarse is the facilitator, but there is an active participation from both the private and public sector members; decisions are taken together in the meetings we set up" (Aliarse representative, personal communication, December 21, 2011).

In fact, most of the partnerships have been born thanks to Aliarse's initiative in seeking out potential allies for a particular project. Even though there is not a conscious public relations strategy, their approach to the creation of partnerships exhibits clear public relations qualities. Several participants mentioned that their organization had been approached by Aliarse and invited to participate in a partnership that was intended to address an issue that might appeal to them based on their business orientation.

There is a particular partnership in full effect currently that is a perfect example of the community nurturing role Aliarse has. The idea comes up after a law was approved regarding the waste management process for plastic residue. Aliarse, along with another nonprofit, come up with a plan to create a partnership which would bring together different private sector companies affected by this law, and design a program to improve the way the plastic waste was being recycled. Then proceeded to invite several companies, create the partnership, designate a strategy and roll out the campaign. The communications director for one of the private sector companies described Aliarse's role by saying "they are the ones that take us by the hand and bring us all together. They coordinate and run meetings, produce the materials; they have the lead on this project" (personal communication, January 27, 2012). Another corporate communications representative from the private sector, whose organization is involved in a different partnership, described Aliarse's role by commenting that "Aliarse's role was important because it brought together all the members that were interested in the topic of road safety. Aliarse acted as the leader, the administrator, the organizer" (personal communication, February 7, 2012).

Aliarse's work in their communitarian public relations approach has been a determining factor in addressing one of the biggest obstacles that multi-sector partnerships for development face in Costa Rica: trust. Several participants mentioned this as one of the biggest challenges they had encountered in working with members from a different sector, whether it was public or private. "This isn't a secret to anybody, there is a great lack of trust between sectors," commented one participant from the nonprofit sector (personal communication, February 13, 2012). A community relations manager from the private sector mentioned that when working with the public sector the issue of trust is evident because there is a sense that behind apparent altruistic intentions, there is always a commercial motivation. She emphasized the importance of Aliarse's intervention in these scenarios to bring credibility and neutrality to the initial negotiation process; "everyone always has some stereotypes and paradigms about the other members, so having a third party that is a nonprofit searching to create a dialogue makes you feel more at ease" (personal communication, February 10, 2012).

After this analysis, RQ1 has found that Aliarse predominantly uses a public relations community nurturing approach in its management of partnerships. Nonetheless, the other two levels, namely community involvement and community organizing, are also present in the organizations communitarian public relations approach but to a lesser extent. Even with the absence of a clearly designated person in the role of public relations, the organization has demonstrated to take on public relations tactics and execute them as part of their management style.

The Seven Cs of Collaboration

The revision of the literature on public-private partnerships emphasized seven items that contributed to a successful collaboration between the members of a

partnership. The seven Cs are the following: connection, clarity of purpose, congruency, creation of value, continual learning, commitment, and communication. The interviews examined how and to what extent these elements were integrated into the operations and management of the existing multi-sector partnerships that Aliarse has helped create.

Creation of Value

The overwhelming majority of participants emphasized that creation of value is one of the most important aspects of the multi-sector partnerships they are involved in and also the primary reason why they joined Aliarse in the first place. A representative from Aliarse mentioned that the organization was created due to an understanding that “the challenges the country is facing cannot be solved by the public sector alone” (personal communication, December 21, 2011). He also explained that back in 2005, before Aliarse was born, they were witnessing how many companies were spending high amounts of money in very non-strategic ways, “we could align those efforts with the main areas of need in the country and have a much bigger impact” (personal communication, December 21, 2012). When consulted about the added value each member brings to the table, another Aliarse employee explained that the public sector provides a certain level of influence in public policy, and the certainty that the work done through the partnerships has a national impact. On the other hand, the private sector brings many different benefits but mainly their access to readily available human and financial resources that the public sector lacks. “They complement each other. By being part of the organization they provide it with the security and recognition of having the leaders of both sectors” committed to developing initiatives of national importance (Aliarse representative, personal communication, January 30, 2012).

Many of the participants shared their understanding of their inability to tackle the issues on their own and, therefore, their need to reach out to others if they ever wanted to have an effect on a particular issue. When asked why they chose to enter a partnership instead of trying to come up with a strategy on their own the representative from a private sector organization said, “going in alone would be like shooting ourselves in the foot. All of us together have a better understanding of the issue and a level of know-how that would have taken us years to reach on our own” (personal communication, January 27, 2012). Aliarse has maximized the diversity of its members by creating work clusters that group members with similar interests and allows them to collaborate in effective and efficient ways. An advisor from the public sector even mentioned that understanding this potential for creation of value is a determinant factor for a successful partnership. He commented that in his experience, “when each of the actors has seen each other as complementary and not as competitors, then results have been very positive” (personal communication, February 13, 2012).

Continual Learning

Continual learning was another component that came up regularly in the conversations with participants. Tied closely to the creation of value, it is important for members of the same partnership to know each other, understand their motivations, restrictions, and capabilities in order to make the most of the collaboration. The community relations manager from a private sector organization explained that they joined Aliarse because it was an optimal space to “share and learn what organizations from different industries and sectors were doing in terms of public-private partnerships” (personal communication, January 25, 2012).

A strong indicator of the process of continual learning has to do with the speed at which both private and public sector operate. Several participants mentioned that this was one of the valuable lessons they had received from working with the opposite sector:

It has been a process that requires a lot of patience; the speed at which the government and the private sector work are completely different. In this country if the government wants to take a step it has to ask for permission from both feet. (Corporate communications manager-private sector, personal communication, January 25, 2012)

Another participant from the private sector mentioned that speed is an issue at times because there are many different opinions that need to be heard and considered before making a decision. Incidentally, the decision-making process on the government's side is slower and, therefore, they require much more consultation and deliberation before agreeing to a particular topic. "As time goes by and we get to know each other better we become more efficient. Now a meeting to discuss a few points does not take us four hours" (personal communication, January 27, 2012). Similarly, it was interesting to see how the public sector also saw the issue of timing and speed as a lesson to be taken from their collaboration with the private sector. A representative from the public sector commented that working with the private sector has been hard, not in terms of agreeing on issues but in how many less restrictions private sector companies have. They have to work on projects with much anticipation, state budgets are defined a year in advance, there is a very strict public spending legislation that limits the contributions public sector institutions can make to the partnerships.

The issue of trust came up again in this particular component. A participant, who is a communications director, explained the apprehension that exists when the partnership is first established, "things progress in stages. When you sit down for the

first time with four other organizations that you have never worked with, there is a certain level of distrust" (personal communication, January 25, 2012). Particularly in the private sector, companies tend to be very zealous when working with other organizations because it means that what those other entities do affects their own image and reputation. An interviewee, corporate relations manager, compared the initial reactions to a partnership to what you experience when walking blind folded into a room, "we would make decisions and then you just hoped they were going to follow through on what they said they would do" (personal communication, January 25, 2012).

Commitment

The data on the commitment component of a multi-sector partnership presented two different results. One was the commitment to Aliarse as an organization, and a multi-sector partnership in itself; and the other was the commitment to the different partnerships that Aliarse's members and non-members were involved in. It is important to mention that a portion of the participants were representatives of organizations, private and public, that are involved in multi-sector partnerships promoted by Aliarse but are not part of the founding organizations.

For founding member organizations, their commitment was demonstrated with an initial investment of 10 thousand dollars. Initially this was supposed to be a one-time only investment; however, with time Aliarse has not been able to keep a steady flow of income from the existing partnerships, and is now requiring a monthly fee of three thousand dollars from its member organizations. There was a time, precisely when Aliarse was going through a rough financial situation, during which everyone involved with the organization was looking for ways to solve the problem. One participant, community relations manager for a private sector participant, shared that every month

the meeting would always deal with the same issue: money; “it was a heavy year for all of us, we were all working towards that one problem instead of creating new initiatives for collaboration” (personal communication, January 25, 2012). Despite the change in the original agreement, the organizations have stood by their commitment and agreed to the monthly fee. However, not all of them consider they are receiving a reasonable return on their investment. A few participants mentioned that they were not seeing an added value to their involvement in Aliarse and one even intended to leave the organization altogether, but stayed after a series of negotiations.

Another issue that came up during the time of trial, and also challenged the commitment of the founding organizations, was the inclusion of new members to the Advisory Council. Originally the selection of the founding organizations, and only members of the Advisory Council, was so that there was one company or public institution from each industry and area of business. Nevertheless, with the creation of new partnerships and the inclusion of non-members in them, the idea of opening the membership to those organizations came up. It was the same members of the Advisory Council who took the decision to open it up to certain organizations, even if they represented the same industry as one of the founding members. Even though some founding members were somewhat apprehensive, they agreed because they understood that the day will come when the same founding member cannot take part in every single partnership that pertains to their industry or area of business. Inevitably they will require the support of other entities.

The second component to the commitment relates to the partnerships created through Aliarse. The data shows a very strong identification to the partnerships on

behalf of the members. There is also an understanding that, for the most part, these multi-sector partnerships are a long-term commitment. A manager from a private sector organization mentioned that the partnership they are involved with is scheduled to last two years; however, she commented, “I don’t think it’s likely we will shut it down after two years, not after all the work we have invested in it” (personal communication, January 27, 2012). Similarly, the representative from a public sector institution mentioned that their partnership is established to last four to five years, he stated that “if the bonds are still strong we will keep on working however long they want. This is not just an economic issue; this is about people’s lives” (personal communication, February 10, 2012).

The topic of commitment in the government side is somewhat more vulnerable. The public sector suffers a complete staff renovation with every new elected government and the same is true for the heads of many public institutions that are not directly linked to elected officials. Unfortunately, this reflects on the level of commitment that each ministry and head of each institution awards to organizations such as Aliarse. Despite this, however, each of the public sector founding organizations has remained a part of Aliarse since the beginning even through changes in their staffing. This ties back to the profile of the organizations that were hand-picked to work in the creation of Aliarse. These were public and private entities with a history of prioritizing social responsibility and development in their own organizations.

Connection

Commitment is closely related to the issue of connection between the members involved in a multi-sector partnership. The interviews demonstrated that the relationship between the members was very positive. Despite all the challenges involved in working

through partnership, the shared motivation brings everyone together and enables them to collaborate effectively. One participant from the private sector mentioned that “there is a sense of unity, everybody is in the partnership for the right reasons” (personal communication, January 25, 2012). In the same sense a different member from the private sector mentioned that many of the representatives for these companies involved in the partnerships have known each other for a long time; this allows for an easier adaptation process because they know their motivations. This shared purpose and kinship has allowed them to collaborate even with their own competitors, a representative from a private sector company commented about this particular case saying, “the alliance has a shared objective which is in the country’s best interest, even when there is an economic interest in the partnership this is an inclusive not exclusive collaboration” (personal communication, January 27, 2012). Other participants, however, expressed that sometimes it was difficult to set aside the commercial interest or the search for a direct benefit to their organizations. However, when this happened Aliarse would intervene and act as a mediator to reconcile the demands and expectations members had and arrange a satisfactory outcome for all.

Clarity of Purpose and Congruency

The connection between members also extends to the clarity of purpose and congruency exhibited in their decision-making process. Participants were consistent in their evaluation of the way that decisions are made in the Advisory Council and in the partnerships they take part in. When talking about the way agreements are reached within Aliarse the corporate social responsibility coordinator for a private sector organization explained “the decision-making process is very participative and democratic. It is one of the things I like the most about the Council in the sense that

there is an opportunity for everyone to express their pros and cons and reach consensus together" (personal communication, February 7, 2012). A representative from Aliarse stated that they have rarely ever had trouble making decisions, "it is almost always a unanimous vote on the decisions we make" (personal communication, December 21, 2012).

When it comes to decision making within the multi-sector partnerships the process is not that much different. A participant, community relations manager, explained that the "work plans and strategies are defined together" (personal communication, February 10, 2012); while another participant commented that the mission, vision, and strategy for their partnership had also been created by the group leading the partnership. Even in partnerships in which there is a member with a clear leadership, the decisions are still made in consensus with all members; a participant mentioned:

Some decisions are made by the top players and the rest of us support their decisions, but it is a course of action where we all get our say. We meet every so often and discuss the progress [of the project]. It's a very open and mature group, we have been working for some time now and feedback is always welcome. (Community relations manager-private sector, personal communication, February 10, 2012)

There was a particular case, brought up by one of the participants representing the private sector, in which the lack of clarity in the purpose of the partnership almost cost Aliarse the partnership itself, but also the membership of one of the organizations involved in the project. He explained:

Aliarse came and proposed a project. We began a very informal process; I guess you could call it cooperation. We had meetings but we never signed an agreement or anything that would define who was responsible for what. (personal communication, February 1, 2012)

After the proposed project fell through due to a lack of coordination and clear expectations, the organization threatened to leave Aliarse. However, after a negotiation process that involved higher-rank representatives from both parts, they agreed to stay and resume the partnership. The biggest lesson, the participant explained, was the need to be very clear from the beginning about the purpose and expectations for the partnership, define the roles for each member, and get it all in writing. Interestingly enough, the practice of establishing the partnerships in an official terms of agreement document is standard practice when working with the public sector but not for the private sector, at least this was not evident from the data.

Communication

The final component from the seven Cs of collaboration is communication. There was abundant data in this area and the results were quite similar across the board, with a few exceptions that will be explained in further detail.

Considering the management of individual partnerships is very similar to how Aliarse is run, there was no surprise to find out that the communication aspect is also very similar in both. Several participants qualified the communication within Aliarse and the partnerships as very open. One participant, representing the private sector, mentioned that because it is a smaller group that it is more manageable. “There is plenty of opportunity to have an effect on what decisions will be made and what projects will be set in Aliarse’s agenda. This is a very positive thing because we always reach consensus based off of someone’s opinion, position or idea,” a participant said (personal communication, February 7, 2012).

Issues such as the inclusion of new organizations into the Advisory Council show that Aliarse has established an open way of communication for members to express

their ideas, concerns and, together, reach an agreement. In a similar way, when some members in the Advisory Council started feeling that Aliarse was not fulfilling their expectations they approached the organization, shared their concerns and this led to positive changes in the organizations management. A participant, communications director for a private sector organization, commented on this same openness by stating that “sitting down and talking has been the ideal way to express our ideas, concerns and suggestions. It is the way most of us do it: we talk to Aliarse and they bring it up at the meetings for the group to discuss” (personal communication, January 25, 2012).

Meetings were chosen by every single participant as the primary way of communication, closely followed by electronic mail. The Advisory Council meets once a month and the partnerships meet either once every two weeks or once a month. In addition to those meetings, there are subcommittees established to work on particular issues within Aliarse. These are also composed by the members of the Advisory Council and meet at least once a month. In addition, some of the partnerships have created subcommittees to delegate certain aspects of the programs, and these also meet at least once a month. A community relations manager interviewee mentioned that the reason why meetings are the best way to share information and communicate with members is because “most of us are doing 20 things at the same time, which means that if you are trying to get me to read a twenty-page newsletter very few of us are going to take the time to really read it. This is why I think it is focalized in face-to-face meetings so we are present in mind and body” (personal communication, February 10, 2012).

Other channels mentioned by the participants included emails and phone calls. Very few mentioned the yearly newsletter InfoAliarse, even fewer could refer to it by name and were unsure how often it was published. Hardly any mentioned the website and those who did mention it commented they seldom turn to it for informational purposes. Only one person mentioned Aliarse's Facebook page. Despite the varied channels of communication, participants referred to the meetings as their main source of information. It is during the meetings that they find out what other members are working on and the progress other partnerships are making.

Members' evaluation of the communication efforts and tools was very diverse. For those who are content with the quality and quantity of the information and communication opportunities they have used expressions such as "it is enough for the communication needs we have currently. If we had anything else for our communication it would become noise" (Corporate relations-private sector, personal communication, February 7, 2012). A participant, private sector representative, mentioned that the relationship within Aliarse was more like a family and this allowed for "simpler" communication (personal communication, February 7, 2012). Another participant, also from the private sector, qualified it by saying "it has good flow, easy and friendly" (personal communication, February 10, 2012).

For those members who mentioned they were not completely satisfied with the way communication is managed, expressions such as "there is always room for improvement" and "communication has always been a weak area in Aliarse" were commonplace (personal communication, January 25, 30 and February 7, 2012). Participants are aware that as the relationship between members improves, the

communication will become a much easier task. There has even been a significant improvement from the way communication was handled when Aliarse was first created. One participant from a private sector organization described it saying “we would be asked to attend a monthly meeting and they would inform us of what was going on. There was no process or a participatory plan” (personal communication, February 1, 2012). Now the situation has improved considerably and there is more of a two-way communication channel between Aliarse and its member organizations.

Aliarse still needs to correct certain aspects that members are expecting to see in the organization’s management of communication. A coordinator representing a private sector company commented, “members lack a lot of information. There has to be something that tells me how the organization is doing” (personal communication, January 25, 2012). InfoAliarse was created with this purpose; however, a director from a public sector institution mentioned that “I don’t think it should be created as a newsletter of what has already been done. I think we should be using a much more interactive tool with daily bits of news and interactive features” (personal communication, January 30, 2012). Additionally, a participant from the private sector commented that he is missing a way to be more in contact with other members, “I think we are missing stronger bonds amongst the member organizations, there is no flow of information” (personal communication, February 1, 2012).

When it comes to communication within the partnerships, the situation is very similar. Meetings and emails are the main channels for information sharing and communication. It appears as though partnerships have an even more informal structure for communication. A participant from the private sector mentioned, “there isn’t

an established protocol for this effect [communication], communication with the members of the partnership is conducted freely. The relevant topics are brought to the meetings and discussed there" (personal communication, February 10, 2012).

External communication, while not the focus of the study, was brought up by several of the participants as an area that is in urgent need of improvement. Aliarse does not have a strategy for communicating with the news media or other external audiences. In the same sense, there are no guidelines to how external communication should be handled in partnerships. Currently, members will give up some of their advertising and public relations budgets to place news about the partnerships they are involved in, but it is on their behalf, not using Aliarse's voice. Members are longing for Aliarse to position itself as the leading organization in the field, communicating about the partnerships they are promoting, and even coordinating to have a shared message across the board.

Finally, the perspective on the management of communication from within Aliarse is somewhat hopeful. There is a clear awareness that communication is not one of the organization's strengths; however, in the same sense, they are aware that this should not be the case. Both internal and external communications suffer due to a lack of resources, financial and human, and this creates significant frustration for those leading the organization. An Aliarse representative described it saying, "despite the fact that I know the huge impact communications can have on the organization, it is too risky to invest in a person dedicated to communication considering the limited resources we currently have ... it makes me terribly mad" (personal communication, December 21, 2012). Another representative from Aliarse commented that "communication as a

strategic line of work has not been addressed the way it should" (personal communication, January 30, 2012). She attributed the problem to a financial issue due to a lack of charitable state for nonprofits in Costa Rica. This means that most of their time and efforts are spent trying to create new income opportunities for the organization; "it is sad because most of the time we should be spending creating strategies to collaborate with the country's development, which is the reason we exist for in the first place, we spend defining how to keep the organization alive" (personal communication, January 30, 2012).

RQ2 has demonstrated that, to a larger or lesser extent, all seven Cs of collaboration are being used in the development and management of multi-sector partnerships in Aliarse. Aspects like communication and clarity of purpose need to be reinforced, while areas like continual learning and creation of value represent two of the strongest areas both in Aliarse and in the partnerships it facilitates.

Participatory Communication in Multi-Sector Partnerships

The information available prior to the data collection stage allowed the researcher to establish a proposition about the way Aliarse goes about managing its partnerships. It was safe to assume that the participatory paradigm presented in the literature review was a dominant model in the administration of Aliarse and its partnerships.

The data collection provided significant information to support the proposition. The essence of Aliarse is participatory in its management of the organization, its relationships with members, and the dynamics of cooperation within the partnerships. The coordinator for communications from a private sector organization mentioned that entities such as Aliarse should possess two main qualities: "negotiation skills and a great capacity to generate dialogue" (personal communication, January 25, 2012); both

qualities are key elements of the participatory paradigm. This participatory inclination is first witnessed at the highest level with the Administrative Board, an Aliarse representative commented about their decision making process:

We sit down and just have a conversation. All the feedback we receive we share with the executive administration. They are more suggestions and guides for actions so they can use them for their decision making process. (personal communication, January 30, 2012)

In a similar way, Aliarse's President is very involved in the creation of new partnerships, new members, and spreading the word about Aliarse. A representative from Aliarse commented, "he is very connected with the public relations aspect. It's not common to find a president who is this involved" (personal communication, January 30, 2012).

Aliarse's role in the creation and coordination of the multi-sector partnerships can be interpreted as a participatory approach to partnerships. The actions stem from an understanding of the need for collaboration and a desire to create greater value in order to effect change in the Costa Rican society. Members value the determination and initiative Aliarse takes in searching for opportunities for collaboration. One participant, representing the private sector, summed up the sentiment by stating their particular expectation of what Aliarse should be: "Aliarse should have knowledge of the programs and projects that the government and public sectors have; they should bring that to the private sector saying 'this is what we can work on together' and find the necessary members to carry it out" (personal communication, January 25, 2012).

The Advisory Council is the maximum expression of participatory communication in their decision making process. Meetings are the perfect vehicle to foster conversations and discussions around the issues that pertain to the organization. The power is equally distributed amongst all the people involved and decisions are made by

those who are directly affected by them. The division of labor by creating sub-committees emphasizes the need for collaboration and an orientation towards encouraging members to use their expertise and knowledge for the promotion of the organization. The same applies for the partnerships themselves. They have established leadership groups composed by the representatives from the member organizations and together they reach consensus on the issues that refer to the management and execution of each partnership. A participant representing the private sector commented on those partnerships that create sub-committees, “they were born out of the need for labor division; we all wanted to be a part of every stage and aspect of the partnership and that way we were not making any progress” (personal communication, January 27, 2012).

There are, however, traces of a modernization approach to the management of Aliarse. The concerns expressed by some participants as to the lack of current and updated information is one of those traits of modern communication. Similarly there is a potential risk of some organizations relying too much on Aliarse to lead the efforts in the creation and coordination of the partnerships. Comments such as “we just wait for Aliarse to call a meeting” (personal communication, January 27, 2012) or talking about the volunteer programs “they organize everything and we just join the different initiatives” (personal communication, January 25, 2012) reflect a slight inclination on behalf of Aliarse, to take too much control in some projects. Another participant, representative of a private sector company, addressed this topic and explained that these issues may be derived from the organizational structure. He commented that at time it feels like it is the members working for the goals established by Aliarse, “in part it

is understandable because they are dedicated to it full-time" (personal communication, February 10, 2012).

It is clear, after an analysis of the data, to determine that the proposition about Aliarse's primary use of a participatory paradigm in its operations is supported. However, there is room for improvement as participants have pointed out areas where there is still a modernization approach present; an understandable weak link for a small and young organization such as Aliarse.

The following chapter will analyze the findings and their relevance to this study. Similarly it will draw conclusions from the data and how this reflects on the organization, its management of partnerships, member perceptions and areas for improvement.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Following the presentation of the data collected, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of what the data represents, identify areas of success as well as areas of improvement for Aliarse. The analysis has been broken down into four main categories for a more manageable interpretation of the facts followed by a section addressing the research's theoretical implications. The first category deals with all the conclusions derived from the analysis of the data as it pertains to the organization directly. While they may involve other actors, these are findings that affect Aliarse in one or several ways. The second category has to do with partnerships and the analysis that unveiled certain important aspects that relate back to the management and execution of multi-sector partnerships for development in Aliarse. The third category pertains to information drawn from the data analysis and its connection to the members, those organizations that are either founding members or those who have joined Aliarse in the more recent years as the result of their involvement in a particular partnership. The final category deals with all the aspects of communications that are of utmost importance and relevance to this study.

Aliarse

After the careful analysis of the data, there is no doubt that Aliarse operates as a multi-sector partnership itself. The creation of an organization that would bring together representatives from several industries across the private and public sectors is a demonstration of an innate collaborative spirit. The founders' desire to take what they saw were large quantities of money being invested in less-than strategic ways by the companies in Costa Rica, led them to create a collaboration platform where they could

maximize the financial resources by using them in a strategic way and create a long-lasting effect. It is this same strategic mentality that needs to arise in order to address their communications in the same way. While it is understandable that their financial situation is a top priority for the Administrative Board and the Advisory Council, a little more attention to their communications efforts could have a powerful effect. Dedicating more attention to the strategy behind their communication could allow them to direct resources in a more efficient way by addressing the interests and needs of their members, this just at the internal level.

When analyzed from the communitarian public relations perspective, it was clear that Aliarse had been created within the parameters of a community organizing model. However, there was no indication that this was a deliberate act but more of a response to the ideal structure for the organization. This advantageous position as community creators put Aliarse ahead of other social responsibility focused organizations in Costa Rica, and they would soon follow Aliarse's example.

Aliarse's growth, nonetheless, has led them to adapt their community organizing foundation and convert to a community nurturing model. While the theory revised for this study indicates that the ideal is an organizing level, Aliarse's involvement as liaison, coordinator, facilitator and overseer in the partnerships places their public relations communitarian approach at the community involvement level. This is neither wrong nor a limiting factor for success. The reality of Aliarse sets the stage so that the organization thrives and is most effective when operating at this level; its organizational structure requires an interactive and highly nurturing model. This does not mean that each level is exclusive, on the contrary, Aliarse moves back and forth between levels depending on

the tasks that it is addressing. The constant creation of new partnerships and the search for actors to be involved in those partnerships is a clear community organizing role. At the same time, Aliarse's role before the State institutions as the face of a particular partnership places them on a community involvement level.

In terms of the participatory paradigm, Aliarse has established a horizontal management structure conducive to an open, inclusive communication style. The Administrative Board, and their roundtable dynamics for decision making set the standard for how the organization should undertake the rest of the communication efforts. The Advisory Council in its collaborative and open design represent one of Aliarse's strongest assets; it has diversity in its members, representation of several industries, and multiplicity of resources and qualifications. It is here where the real value of Aliarse lies, and it is in the management's best interest to safeguard this core team.

Lastly, the limitations that Aliarse has encountered, particularly in human and financial resources, have caused hints of modernization to re-surface. From the data and the interactions during interviews, it is possible to deduce that those times when Aliarse does seem to take over too much, or attempts to control certain aspects of a project it is not out of a desire to be in charge, but a lack of clear specifications in the terms of the partnerships. If Aliarse is to maintain a role of facilitator and coordinator, it is important that every partnership has clearly outlined duties and responsibilities for each member so that everyone is sure of what their assignments are.

Partnerships

With the exception of one, every membership that Aliarse has launched has been successful thus far. Being such a young organization, every partnership is still in the development or execution stage and it is hard to measure impact or results at this point.

However, based on the reactions from members and the reactions from the project's beneficiaries, the results are overwhelmingly positive.

There are several areas for improvement, one of those involves the creation of partnerships with the public sector. One of the lessons that Aliarse and its members have learned, is that dealing with government agencies entails a significant amount of paper work, bureaucracy and time. Once this initial stage is overcome and the permission is granted for a new partnership, the rest of the process runs notably smoother. However it is that initial stage that usually takes up several months before the members can start working together towards the creation of a successful campaign or program. It would be ideal for Aliarse, if they developed a protocol for partnering with each of the government institutions that are a member of Aliarse. This would enable future partnerships to know exactly what steps to take and assist them to go through the process much faster. By creating a guideline for partnering with the public sector, Aliarse is decreasing the learning curve for future members and putting the previously acquired knowledge to good use.

Similarly, just as the public sector requires to have written agreements for each partnership, Aliarse should make this a standard requirement for all partnerships, regardless of what sector the members belong to. This will establish clear stipulations for terms of agreement, responsibilities and timelines for each of the members. If these agreements are defined collectively among all members, there is no need for Aliarse to step in and take over certain aspects, an action that might be perceived by members as controlling and dominant.

Members

One of the most positive outcomes from the interviews was the undeniable consensus in the motivations each member had for joining Aliarse and the partnerships it helps create. Everyone understood that working together would allow them to create bigger and better programs, they could learn from each other, and collaborate to use each member's expertise to produce better results. This acknowledgement of the potential for creation of value and continual learning is a strong component of the success Aliarse has had so far. As long as each member, old and new, maintains this vision then the organization will be on the right track to creating strategic, lasting multi-sector partnerships for the development of Costa Rica.

There is another area for improvement in terms of the expectations members have for Aliarse. Several participants commented on their desire for Aliarse to be constantly producing new opportunities for collaboration. They expect the management level of the organization to be on the lookout for collaboration opportunities on the public sector's side and bring those prospective options to the private sector and, together, create solutions. Members are willing to participate and work together in every way possible, but they do require Aliarse to take the initiative in locating those windows of opportunity.

Finally, there is a pressing need for a re-definition of the Advisory Council. As new members join Aliarse, the founding members have been concerned with the type of decision-making power awarded to new members, as well as the requirements that they should meet. As explained in chapter four, the profile for the founding member organizations was very specific and only a handful of organizations, at the time, met the

criteria. Now that the importance of social responsibility and multi-sector partnerships has been adopted by many more organizations, they are interested in joining organizations such as Aliarse. While some members are interested in seeing Aliarse grow, others are concerned of what that might mean for their position within the organization. Perhaps Aliarse would be best suited with pyramid scheme where members could be ranked according to their level of involvement in the organization. As an example, founding members who made the initial investment of ten thousand dollars would hold a higher position than those members who have recently joined and are paying the monthly fee of three thousand dollars. The higher the position, the more power they have in the decision making processes of the organization.

It is important to emphasize that new members are encouraged and will, eventually be required. If Aliarse keeps growing at the same pace it is growing now, it will not be too long before the existing members cannot take on more partnerships. This predicted growth makes the definition of member tiers even more necessary in order to ensure an effective management of the partnerships and equal opportunity for all members to take part in the initiatives.

Communication

As a young organization working with some of the biggest private and public organizations in the country, Aliarse has done a surprisingly good job at communicating with its members. There are particular areas for improvement which, if addressed, could significantly improve the relationship between members, and alleviate part of the workload for the staff.

There is no discussion in terms of the effectiveness of meetings as a communication channel. With high level, busy representatives for each of the member organizations, bringing people together and using that time to share information about the organization seems like the most time-efficient way to reach out to them. Nonetheless, several participants pointed out a void in terms of updated, timely information. While the meetings assure the members presence, it is unlikely that they retain everything that is covered during the meetings. There is a need for an interactive, timely, and concise source of information. InfoAliarse, in its yearly editions, is not the right medium to share news about the organization or information that it is important for members to know. With an audience that is extremely busy and constantly bombarded with information, Aliarse needs to develop a tool that is concise, efficient, and attention grabbing. InfoAliarse is better served being an annual report with briefs about partnerships, new members, results and the like. This is a tool created less with news-sharing purposes, but instead, it is intended to serve as a memoir of the yearly accomplishments as an organization.

The current size of the organization favors the developmental stage of the communications in Aliarse. It is necessary that the family-like environment be taken advantage of, and used to test different approaches for a new, updated channel of communication. This way the channel will be created taking into account the expectations, needs and desires of the target audience. Just like many other aspects in Aliarse, communication processes must be participatory and inclusive.

Despite the fact that the Administrative Board and the management level at Aliarse are aware of their lack of communications strategy, other issues such as

finances take priority over the communication efforts the organization needs. It is a shame that so much time needs to be devoted to finding new sources of income, and running the actual partnerships when many of these issues could be partially solved with a creative communications strategy. The awareness present at the top management level of Aliarse needs to evolve and transform to actions that lead to concrete actions in the communications area.

Conclusions and Theoretical Implications

The little theoretical work on the communications or public relations aspect of multi-sector partnerships for development makes the current research very relevant to the field. The increasing number of public and private sector organizations that are engaging in this type of collaboration projects creates a demand for grounded, solid theory in terms of how to manage the role of communication.

The lessons drawn from this research have emphasized the need for a highly involved public relations approach in the creation and execution of multi-sector partnerships for development. The communitarian public relations approach theory argues that it is the practitioner's role to bring together actors who share interests and concerns about particular topics; by establishing different levels of engagement it is public relation's role to organize and facilitate the creation of these multi-sector partnerships and guide their execution. Participants stressed the importance of Aliarse's role in the coordination and direction of the projects and partnerships.

Similarly, participatory communication was confirmed as a necessary foundation for the successful execution and management of multi-sector partnerships. The collaborative work dynamic of Aliarse is the key to a wholesome and effective strategy for the partnerships created through the organization. While some participants had

reservations as to the way particular aspects were handled, the overall evaluation was favorable and highlighted the benefits of participatory communication in Aliarse.

Improvements to this specific aspect of communication should be addressed promptly by consulting with members about their expectations and agreeing on the best way to meet those expectations. If participatory communication and collective decision-making has been an effective way of reaching decisions in the past, this should be addressed in the same way.

The seven Cs of collaboration proved to be an adequate tool for addressing the multiple aspects of multi-sector partnerships. All of them were present in the research and the data confirmed a strong emphasis on specific items such as a creation of value and continual learning. There was, however, one aspect that came up in the data which was not accounted for in the seven Cs: trust. While implicitly covered by the connection item within the seven Cs, trust was a strong enough theme that it is important to refer to it separately. The limitations of the study make it hard to predict whether trust is a significant factor when working in other environments, but the reality of Costa Rica's relationship between private and public sectors does require multi-sector partnerships to address trust issues before entering into a collaboration project.

From a grounded theory perspective, it is possible to state that a significant level of trust amongst participants of multi-sector partnerships is a fundamental element for a successful collaboration project. Despite the fact that the literature did not review trust as a significant factor, it did allude to it indirectly by acknowledging that lack of trust would be a hindrance in developing a successful partnership (Austin, 2000). This

research uncovered how important trust between partners is, and how much it can interfere with the development and establishment of a multi-sector partnership.

An important aspect that the theory has not addressed clearly has to do with a critical voice about multi-sector partnerships. Overall participants were extremely positive in their evaluations of this collaboration phenomenon and were convinced that more organizations should be adopting it. The only time participants referenced failed multi-sector partnerships dealt with cases in which members had entered into the relationship with the wrong motivations or where the organization had been handled so poorly that no progress was ever made.

In summary, it is clear that the theoretical frameworks that guided this study have all been confirmed to a great extent. It is also a positive addition to have found particular aspects that drew from the contextual reality of a study located in Costa Rica, and provided insights as to the particular relationship between the private and public sectors.

Research Limitations

The researcher has acknowledged the limitations in the study and has attempted to minimize any interference in the collection or analysis of the data. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the qualitative approach to research raises a number of concerns in terms of the validity of the study; even more so the use of semi-structured interviews create the risk of interviewer bias. The research never intended to discard the influence of the interviewer but to use her native Spanish speaking ability and shared nationality with the participants to establish rapport. While the study aimed to conduct the interviews utilizing videoconferencing through Skype, not all participants had access to the software therefore some of the interviews were done through telephone calls. This did

not represent a significant obstacle in the analysis of the data but it did hinder the interviewer from reading non-verbal cues in the participants' interactions.

Similarly, the qualitative nature of the present study shed light on some important aspects, nonetheless, there is still much more that could have been unearthed if additional research tools or a quantitative approach had been included.

Another limitation that the study presented was the size of the organization chosen as the sample for the study. The organization, while small and engaged with some of the largest public and private organizations in Costa Rica still has only a small network of institutions that would know Aliarse and the partnerships well enough to participate in the study. A larger pool of participants could have contributed to a larger amount and quality of information.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should look to extend beyond the internal communications processes and analyze the external communication efforts of multi-sector partnerships. This study proved there is a weakness in the promotion of multi-sector partnerships and that it could be hindering the effectiveness of current and future collaborations.

Researchers should also look to analyze other existing multi-sector partnerships for development in Costa Rica and in other Latin American countries. The trend these countries have followed in terms of their development of public relations and collaboration sets the stage for a deep, cross-country analysis of multi-sector partnerships in the region. Furthermore, the trust issues discovered in this study should prompt other researchers to dissect this aspect of multi-sector partnerships. It is important to determine whether this was the result of a particular socio-economic

situation or a prevalent factor in this form of collaboration that has not been accounted for.

In addition, the field should attempt to study the communication processes of partnerships that take place without the intermediary role of a nonprofit organization like Aliarse. The examination should focus on analyzing factors such as management and communication when there is no third-party involvement.

Future research should attempt to use more and diverse methodologies in the analysis of communication management in multi-sector partnerships for development. Observation and content analysis are two of the suggested methodology approaches for extended research.

As mentioned earlier, it is important that theory with a critical view of multi-sector partnerships be developed. Examination of failed projects for collaboration could shed light on aspects that the theory has yet to cover. Without such a critical analysis of multi-sector partnerships the theory is incomplete.

In a similar way, there is an important opportunity for researchers to uncover the true, personal motivations behind the altruism exhibited by participants of multi-sector partnerships. While it is confirmed that the collective well-being is a primary motivating factor for collaboration, participants of these partnerships also receive individual benefits from their involvement; research should attempt to discover what those benefits are.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ALIARSE REPRESENTATIVES

English Version

1. How were the founding members selected?
2. What strengths and added value does each of the partners bring to Aliarse?
3. How are business decisions made in the organization?
 - a. Who is involved in the decision-making process?
4. Who decides how to communicate important news from the organization?
 - a. How do they make these decisions? By themselves, include other people?
5. From international partners, how much influence do they have in the way the organization and partnerships are run?
6. How does Aliarse communicate with the founding members of the organization?
7. How are partnerships created?
 - a. Are partners invited to join partnerships? If yes, could you please explain?
 - b. Do organizations request to join partnerships? If yes, could you please explain?
 - c. How are the tactical aspects of the programs decided?
8. In a partnership, how much power do the partners have in running the programs?
9. How are operational decisions made in the partnerships?
10. How are business decisions made in the partnerships?
11. What role does Aliarse have in the partnerships?
12. How does Aliarse communicate with the members of the partnerships?
13. Who is in charge of the communication in Aliarse?
14. Who is in charge of the communication in the partnerships?
 - a. Between partners.
 - b. With the beneficiaries of the partnership.
15. What are the top priorities in running a partnership?
 - a. Is communication a priority in the management of the partnership?
16. How are each of the following items addressed in the partnerships?
 - a. Connection with the people that make up the partnership.
 - i. With the purpose for which the partnership is created.
 - b. Clarity of the purpose for which the partnership is being created.
 - c. Congruency of the mission, strategy, and values that the partnership is promoting.
 - d. Creation of value for all the partners.
 - e. Communication between partners.
 - f. Continual learning (about and from other partners).
 - g. Commitment to the partnership.

APPENDIX B
GUÍA DE ENTREVISTA PARA COLABORADORES Y ADMINISTRADORES DE
ALIARSE

Spanish Version

1. ¿Cómo se realizó la selección de las organizaciones fundadoras?
2. ¿Cuáles son las fortalezas y el valor agregado que trae cada miembro a Aliarse?
3. ¿Cómo se toman decisiones de negocios en la organización?
 - a. ¿Quiénes están involucrados en la toma de decisiones?
4. ¿Quién decide cómo se comunican las noticias importantes en la organización?
 - a. ¿Cómo se toman estas decisiones? ¿La persona responsable, se incluye a otros?
5. Los aliados internacionales, qué tanta influencia tienen en la forma en que se maneja la organización y las alianzas?
6. ¿Cómo se comunica Aliarse con las organizaciones fundadoras?
7. ¿Cómo se crean las alianzas?
 - a. ¿Los aliados reciben invitaciones para participar? Favor explicar.
 - b. ¿Los aliados solicitan unirse a las alianzas? Favor explicar
 - c. ¿Cómo se deciden los aspectos tácticos de los programas a ejecutar?
8. En las alianzas, ¿cuánto poder de decisión/dirección tienen los miembros?
9. ¿Cómo se toman las decisiones en las alianzas?
10. ¿Qué papel juega Aliarse en las alianzas?
11. ¿Cómo se comunica Aliarse con los miembros de las alianzas?
12. ¿Quién está a cargo de la comunicación en Aliarse?
13. ¿Quién está a cargo de la comunicación con las alianzas?
 - a. Entre los miembros
 - b. Con los beneficiarios de la alianza
14. ¿Es la comunicación una prioridad en el manejo de la alianza?
15. ¿Qué tratamiento se le da a los siguientes temas?
 - a. Conexión con las personas que componen la alianza
 - i. con el propósito por el cual la alianza fue creada.
 - b. Claridad del propósito por el cual la alianza fue creada.
 - c. Congruencia entre la misión, la estrategia y los valores que la alianza está promoviendo
 - d. Creación de valor
 - e. Comunicación entre los miembros
 - f. Aprendizaje continuo (acerca de y entre los miembros)
 - g. Compromiso con la alianza

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOUNDING MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS AND REGULAR
MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS OF ALIARSE

English Version

1. What motivated your organization to join Aliarse?
2. What strengths and added value does your organization bring to Aliarse?
3. Are you involved in any specific partnerships currently?
 - a. If no, what partnerships have you been involved with in the past?
4. How are business decisions made in the partnerships?
 - a. Who is involved in the decision-making process?
5. What role does Aliarse have in the partnerships?
6. What role does your organization have in the partnerships?
7. How are the tactical aspects of the programs decided?
8. How much power does your organization have in running the programs in the partnerships?
9. How does Aliarse communicate with you as a member organization?
 - a. How often does Aliarse communicate with you?
 - b. What channels does Aliarse use to communicate with you? (email, meetings, phone calls, etc)
 - c. Are you satisfied with the way Aliarse communicates with you?
10. Is there anything you would improve about the communication aspect?
 - a. What and how would you improve it?
11. Who is in charge of the communication in the partnerships?
 - a. Between partners
 - b. With the beneficiaries of the partnership
12. In your organization, who is the contact person for each partnership that the organization gets involved with?
13. What are the top priorities in running a partnership?
 - a. Is communication a priority in the management of the partnership?
14. How are each of the following items addressed in the partnerships?
 - a. Connection with both the people that make up the partnership
 - i. With the purpose for which the partnership is created.
 - b. Clarity of the purpose for which the partnership is being created.
 - c. Congruency of the mission, strategy, and values that the partnership is promoting.
 - d. Creation of value.
 - e. Communication between partners.
 - f. Continual learning (about and from other partners).
 - g. Commitment to the partnership.

APPENDIX D
GUÍA DE ENTREVISTA PARA MIEMBROS FUNDADORES Y MIEMBROS
REGULARES DE ALIARSE

Spanish Version

1. ¿Qué motivó a su organización a unirse a Aliarse?
2. ¿Qué fortalezas y valor agregado considera que su organización aporta a Aliarse?
3. ¿Actualmente su organización está involucrada en alguna alianza en particular?
 - a. De no ser así, ¿en qué alianzas ha estado involucrada su organización en el pasado?
4. ¿Cómo se toman las decisiones de negocios en la alianza?
 - a. ¿Quiénes están involucrados en el proceso de toma de decisiones?
5. ¿Qué papel juega Aliarse en las alianzas?
6. ¿Qué papel juega su organización en las alianzas?
7. ¿Cómo se definen los aspectos tácticos de los programas?
8. ¿Qué tanto poder tiene su organización en el manejo de las alianzas?
9. ¿Cómo se comunica Aliarse con usted como miembro fundador?
 - a. ¿Con qué frecuencia se comunica Aliarse con su organización?
 - b. ¿Qué canales utiliza Aliarse para comunicarse con su organización? (emails, llamadas, reuniones, etc)
 - c. ¿Está usted satisfecho con la forma en la que Aliarse se comunica con su organización?
10. ¿Hay algo que usted mejoraría en el área de comunicación entre Aliarse y su organización?
 - a. ¿Qué cosas cambiaría y cómo lo haría?
11. ¿Quién está a cargo de la comunicación en las alianzas?
 - a. Entre miembros
 - b. Con los beneficiarios de la alianza
12. En su organización, ¿quién es el contacto para cada alianza en la que la organización se involucra?
13. ¿Cuáles son las prioridades a la hora de manejar la alianza?
 - a. ¿Es la comunicación una prioridad en el manejo de la alianza?
14. ¿Qué tratamiento se le da a los siguientes temas?
 - a. Conexión con las personas que componen la alianza
 - i. Con el propósito por el cual la alianza fue creada.
 - b. Claridad del propósito por el cual la alianza fue creada.
 - c. Congruencia entre la misión, la estrategia y los valores que la alianza está promoviendo.
 - d. Creación de valor.

- e. Comunicación entre los miembros.
- f. Aprendizaje continuo (acerca de y entre los miembros).
- g. Compromiso con la alianza.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Monica Morales Lisac was born and raised in San José, Costa Rica. She earned her bachelor's degree in public relations from the Universidad Interamericana de Costa Rica in 2007, the same year she started working for Comunicación Corporativa Ketchum. In 2010 she was granted a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue her graduate degree in the United States of America. She selected the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communication and in August 2010 began her master's in mass communication with a focus on public relations.

Monica's interests are nonprofit and public interest communications, particularly in the area of social justice and education.