



SHIFTING CURRENTS:

INSIGHTS FROM THE PLAN INTERNATIONAL
AND ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
PARTNERSHIP JOURNEY



About Plan International

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organization that advances children's rights and equality for girls.

We believe in the power and potential of every child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. Working together with children, young people, our supporters and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children.


We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood. And we enable children to prepare for – and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge.

We have been building powerful partnerships for children for over 80 years, and are now active in more than 71 countries.

PLAN INTERNATIONAL IN ASIA

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Finally, to the young people who are bearing and carrying the torch of youth engagement in and beyond ADB, thank you for keeping the spirit alive.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	i
How the Partnership Started	ii
Chapter 1: Shared Values, Shared Journey	2
Chronology of Partnership Milestones	9
Chapter 2: Building Bridges for Partnerships	16
Tool 1. A Partnership Vision Statement Template	17
Tool 2. Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis Template	18
Tool 3. Organizational Context Tool	19
Tool 4. Partnership Assessment Table	20
Tool 5. Champion Mapping Analysis Template	21
Tool 6. The Relationship/Partnership Spectrum	23
Tool 7. The Partnership Agreement Checklist	24
Tool 8. Partnership Analysis Tool	25
Potential Model for an NGO-MDB Partnership	28
Chapter 3: Catalyzing Wider Youth Engagement in ADB	32
Youth for Asia driving social accountability through use of ICT technology - Manila and Hanoi	33
Final Reflections	34
Annex	35
List of References	37



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report aims to document the findings of a comprehensive review of the historical and institutional partnership between Plan International (hereinafter referred to as Plan) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). It captures the process and approaches that Plan has taken in engaging ADB; the key milestones, successes and lessons from such engagement; and the role that the partnership played in supporting wider youth engagement in ADB. Several tools have also been included in the report in order to guide the readers when engaging Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) in similar partnerships.

This report is intended for individuals working in non-government organizations (NGOs) and MDBs, who are looking to form partnerships of a visionary and principled nature. For the sake of the readers, the report has been divided into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1** provides a brief overview of the Plan-ADB partnership. In particular, it covers the scope, milestones and achievements of the partnership to date. As an overview, this chapter aims to provide contextual information that help readers understand the concepts and tools that will be discussed in the next chapters.

- **Chapter 2** discusses the principles for engaging in partnerships with MDBs using lessons from the Plan-ADB partnership, and tools that readers can use when partnering with similar institutions in their field of work.
- **Chapter 3** features ADB Youth for Asia as a specific example of what transformative partnerships, such as the Plan-ADB partnership, can result into, and how these could add value to the objectives and vision of organizations.
- The final chapter provides some concluding remarks on the Plan-ADB partnership.

It is important to note that the principles, lessons and recommendations contained in this report are specific to Plan and ADB, and contextual factors will always inevitably play a major role in the outcome of any engagement. The lessons from the partnership, however, may be transferable to a multitude of potential partnerships where there is common purpose and opportunity.

HOW THE PARTNERSHIP

“[It was] A chance meeting, a fortunate meeting – a meeting that would start a journey in 2010 with Ms. Maja, a gender specialist from Plan International, whose inquisitive and questioning mind appealed to me. Ms. Maja Cubarrubia, whom I would like to say, ‘like me’, was always trying to understand and develop opportunities, and had a natural kind personality and a quiet air of seniority that sparked my professional interest.

There was a magic to her character that attracted me. Her confidence and honesty, her intuition that ADB and Plan had something worth investing in and her appetite for learning fascinated me. At the time, I had felt unprepared and naïve in many areas related to my new job as Head of ADB’s NGO and Civil Society Center.

As an engineer in a social development environment full of people with emotions, frustrations, and impatience to change the world, I clicked with Ms. Maja’s motherly, teaching instincts. Back then, it certainly appeared easier convincing an external partner than my internal ADB colleagues that as an engineer I was in the right job.

I do hope that I have acted on my learnings from her and the many wonderful people I have met and learned from during the Plan partnership. The journey began in Tashkent – an unlikely meeting venue to start but the chance meeting of two born optimists. It was a journey that nobody would have planned... and looking back, both Maja and I are comfortable with that.”

Christopher Ian Morris
*Head of the ADB NGO and
Civil Society Center
Asian Development Bank*



ERSHIP STARTED

In 2010, I represented Plan when the organization was invited to the ADB Board of Governors Meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. At the CSO meeting with ADB President [Haruhiko] Kuroda, Chris [Morris] gave me the opportunity to ask the President a question. After introducing myself, I asked: “Mr. President, where are the young people in this forum? The young people will be paying for all the debts of their countries.”

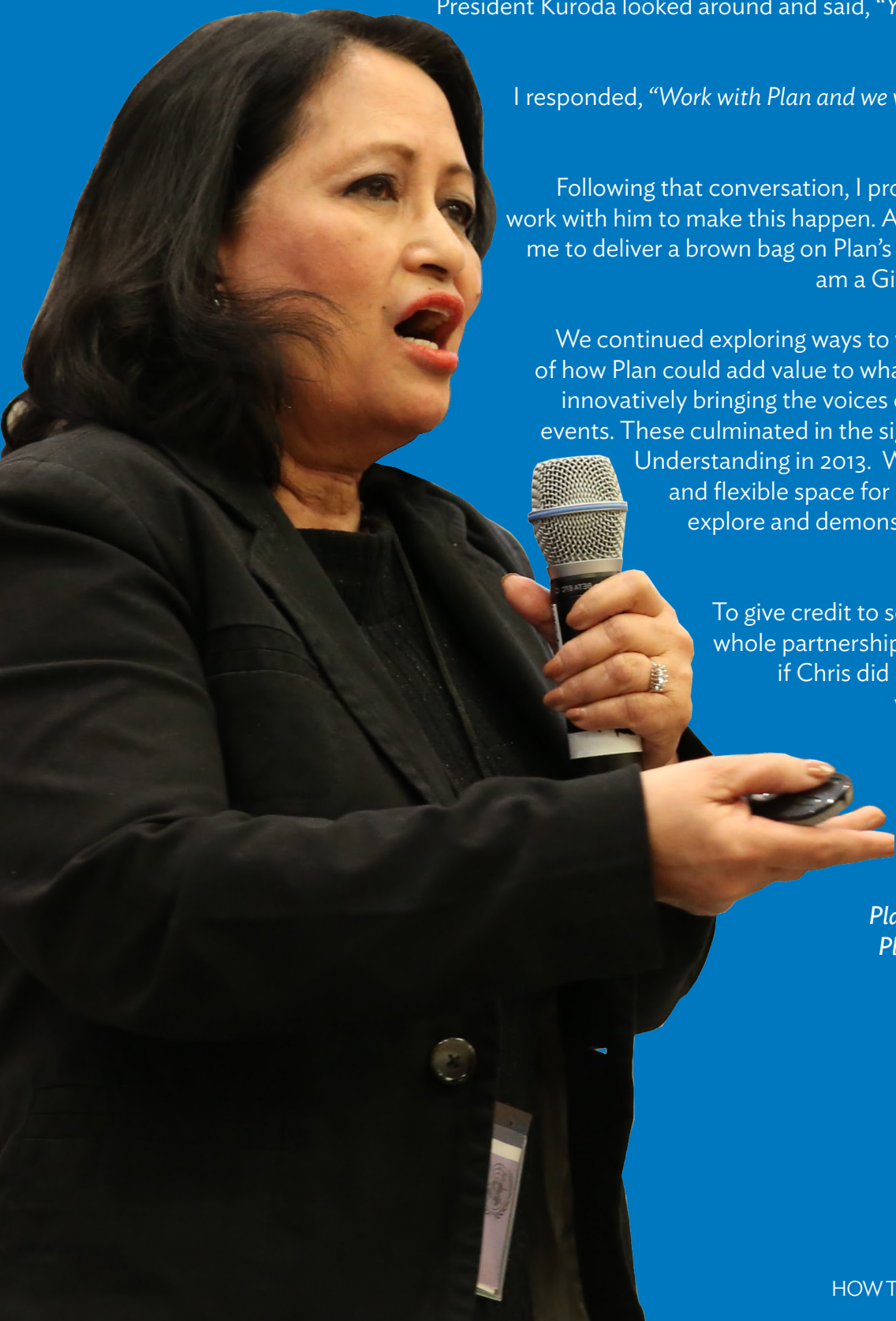
President Kuroda looked around and said, “Yes, there are no young people in this forum.”

I responded, “Work with Plan and we will bring young people to the Bank”.

Following that conversation, I promised Chris that we would work with him to make this happen. After Tashkent, Chris invited me to deliver a brown bag on Plan’s global campaign, Because I am a Girl, in 2012 for the ADB staff.

We continued exploring ways to work together, and thinking of how Plan could add value to what the Bank was doing while innovatively bringing the voices of young people into ADB’s events. These culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2013. We envisioned a more open and flexible space for both parties to experiment, explore and demonstrate what this relationship could become.

To give credit to someone deserving of it, the whole partnership would not have happened if Chris did not accept the challenge of working with young people.



Maja Cubarrubia

*Former Country Director
Plan International Thailand &
Plan International Philippines*





CHAPTER 1

Shared Values, Shared Journey

More than ever, the sheer scale and interconnectedness of global issues and challenges in the 21st Century affirm the need for stronger and more innovative collaborations and partnerships among different actors, including financial institutions and civil society. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) drive this need further, underscoring the role of partnerships in “mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources”, and set the course for achieving sustainable development in all countries.¹

Multilateral development banks (MDBs), such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), shape public policies and development programs through financial instruments and technical assistance to governments. In particular, MDBs support interventions “preventing the ill-effects of underprovided global public goods (GPGs) – such as natural disasters linked to climate change – from reversing development; facilitating developing countries’ access to GPGs, such as international financial markets; and supporting investments in developing countries that generate national development benefits and global co-benefits such as net-zero or reduced carbon emissions”.¹ In order to affect the lives of people across the world, these interventions rely on good governance as it emphasizes transparency and accountability in dealings between governments and MDBs.

CSOs are equally instrumental in boosting the effectiveness of development cooperation. CSOs, which include non-government organizations (NGOs) such as Plan International (herein referred to as ‘Plan’), are valued for their grassroots knowledge and expertise, innovative approaches to development, and commitment to ensure marginalized populations are heard and represented.² Among others, the involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs) in public finance dealings is seen as a way to uphold the tenets of good governance, and reflects efforts to secure civil society participation in the process of decision-making.³

Several MDBs have established formal mechanisms that engage CSOs in partnerships. In 1987, ADB’s policy paper on “The Bank’s Cooperation with Non-government Organizations”⁴ provided a framework for working with NGOs in order to support development efforts in selected operational areas. Such engagement was seen as a way of “enhancing operational effectiveness by using the special capabilities of NGOs in addressing the basic needs of the poor and in the management and conservation of natural resources”. NGOs were regarded as sources of information, contractors, cooperating agencies, and co-financiers (where appropriate), whose knowledge of local conditions lent a comparative advantage to the delivery of development initiatives. As such, ADB’s cooperation with NGOs, in particular, was driven by the need to “integrate NGO experience, knowledge and expertise into ADB operations, such that development efforts ADB supports will more effectively address the issues and priorities reflected in ADB’s development agenda”.⁵

In 2018, 98 percent of ADB’s sovereign operations included civil society engagement through various roles and capacities. To date, CSO participation has consistently stayed above ADB’s annual target of 90 percent.

¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2015). Partnerships for the SDGs: A legacy review towards realizing the 2030 Agenda.

² Asian Development Bank (ADB). (n.d.). Overview of ADB’s Work in Civil Society Partnerships.

³ Isagani Serrano. (1999). CSOs Matter to MDBs.

⁴ ADB. (1998). Cooperation between the Asian Development Bank and Non-Government Organizations.

⁵ ADB. (1998). Cooperation Between Asian Development Bank and Non-Government Organizations.

‘Partnership’: What does it mean?

Partnerships harness the collective influence, expertise and resources of organizations in order to “achieve a level of impact that could not be accomplished independently”.⁶

In Plan, a partnership is a relationship where organizations are “working together on equal terms in a formal, mutually agreed collaboration with shared goals and responsibilities” in a manner that benefits both parties and contributes to a common goal.⁷ Partnerships enable Plan to maximize reach, impact and influence. Thus, these are instrumental to achieving the organization’s global ambition of enabling 100 Million Girls to Learn, Lead, Decide and Thrive.⁸

Similarly, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) views a partnership as “stakeholders participating in decision-making process and/or exerting control over resources to work toward common objectives”.⁹ Partnerships are considered essential to achieving development effectiveness by “leveraging financing, expertise and knowledge for investment and development” and “helping organizations to close gaps and avoid duplications in their programs, support scaled-up operations, and promote harmonized approaches for better development results”.¹⁰

The Plan-ADB partnership reflects the efforts and commitment of various actors within both organizations to work together in pursuit of a common goal. Plan and ADB engaged in a partnership with the initial aim of ensuring

³ KPMG International. (2016). Unlocking the Power of Partnership – A Framework for Effective Cross-Sector Collaboration to Advance the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

⁴ Plan International. (2018). Building Better Partnerships to Advance Children’s Rights and Equality for Girls – Guiding Principles.

⁵ Plan International. (2018). Building Better Partnerships to Advance Children’s Rights and Equality for Girls – Guiding Principles.

young people in the Asia-Pacific region were involved in decisions that ultimately affected their lives. Over the course of the partnership, the relationship has evolved to include collaboration in other areas of focus, which leveraged individual organizational expertise, resources and networks, and benefited both organizations. Currently, the partnership is guided by two formal agreements, 2013–2016 and 2017–2020. Its continued growth provides lessons about nurturing partnerships with similar motivations.

Results of the Plan-ADB Partnership

The partnership has yielded numerous achievements in relation to fostering youth engagement and demonstrating Plan’s expertise in youth safeguarding and empowerment; youth employment and entrepreneurship; gender; climate

change; and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT). These have manifested through knowledge events, project implementation opportunities, greater knowledge-generation and sharing, and recently, the placement of a secondment to ADB.

The results of the partnership have been owed to Plan’s approach of seeing ADB as “more than just a Bank”. ADB staff have remarked that Plan’s lack of an overt fundraising agenda facilitated a relationship that capitalized on non-monetary strengths and enabled the conceptualization and implementation of joint initiatives. This has given Plan a comparative advantage to other NGOs who have sought the same relationship outcomes with ADB.



⁶ Asian Development Bank. (2016). Effectiveness of Asian Development Bank Partnerships.
⁷ Asian Development Bank. (2016). Effectiveness of Asian Development Bank Partnerships.

Knowledge Events and Policy Advocacy

Young people were involved across six iterations of the Asian Youth Forums (AYFs), three ADB International Skills Forums (ISFs), and the Annual Board of Governors Meetings (AGMs). ADB and Plan's combined efforts to bring young people to knowledge events resulted in the mobilization of over 1,300 youth participants, including at least 180 youth participants from Plan programs. Although the initial engagement of youth participants began with supporting roles such as rapporteurs and commenters, these roles grew to include participation as panelists in high-level sessions, co-organizers, facilitators, moderators and session leads, among others.

Plan also mobilized technical experts from across the organization to deliver sessions, serve as panelists and presenters and input into policy and advocacy documents. Specific examples include the provision of inputs into Strategy 2030 and its operational plans; the development of the Incheon Youth Declaration on the Future of Work at the 6th Asian Youth Forum; and, at the country level, participating in the review of ADB Country Partnership Strategies.

DID YOU KNOW?

ADB's Strategy 2030 is a high-level policy document that lays out ADB's path towards "achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty" (ADB, 2018). The strategy responds to a transforming landscape that is characterized by shifts in economic trends that now favor growth in Asia-Pacific; remaining poverty and inequalities; technological advancements; climate change, environmental stress, and natural disasters; infrastructure needs; urbanization; and demographic changes, especially of youth and aging populations.

Under Strategy 2030, ADB has seven operational priorities:

- Addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities
- Accelerating progress in gender equality
- Tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability
- Making cities more livable
- Promoting rural development and food security
- Strengthening governance and institutional capacity
- Fostering regional cooperation and integration

In Strategy 2030, ADB has also committed to become "stronger, better and faster". Strengthened collaboration with civil society organizations has been identified as one of the key strategies to support this institutional objective.

In 2015, ADB and Plan supported the launch of AIESEC International's Launch of Youth for Global Goals (Y4GG), which sought to activate youth leadership in achieving the SDGs. Since then, through AIESEC and Plan's experience in working with young people, Plan, ADB and AIESEC have been collaborating to widely advocate to external and internal stakeholders about the value, approaches and contributions of young people to development initiatives.

Moreover, Plan and ADB's on-going collaboration with AIESEC and other youth organizations in the region are currently feeding into the development of a youth engagement strategy that will outline how ADB can better and more meaningfully engage young people, especially in initiatives related to youth employment, health, and climate change among others.

Project Implementation

To date, Plan has managed ADB-funded projects in Cambodia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, including: *Emergency Assistance and Early Recovery for Poor Municipalities Affected by Typhoon Yolanda (Philippines, 2014)*; *Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Development Planning Project (Cambodia, 2015)*; and *Second Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project (Cambodia, 2017)*.

In addition, Plan is currently implementing a project funded by the Urban Climate Change Resilience Trust Fund (UCCRTF), which supports the monitoring and evaluation of climate investments across eight countries in Asia, as well as a project in Sri Lanka aimed at promoting private sector participation and women's economic empowerment through Technical and Vocational Training in non-traditional sectors.

Plan has played a catalytic role in supporting ADB Youth for Asia (YfA)'s engagement of ADB project officers as well. Plan staff have provided technical input, resources and support in the conceptualization and implementation of YfA projects. In the *Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Development Planning Project*, YfA mobilized youth volunteers and Plan provided guidance and mentorship of young people, who supported local CSOs in implementing climate change adaptation (CCA) activities and created innovative knowledge products on successful CCA practices in Cambodia.

Aside from these direct engagements, Plan has collaborated with the ADB Education Sector Group to share knowledge and innovations in education and skills development. ADB has approved a US\$2 million technical assistance allocation to develop these concepts into projects and programs.

Greater Knowledge Generation and Sharing

Plan and ADB have organized brown bag sessions and similar knowledge-sharing events related to youth employment and technology. Among others, Plan has delivered presentations about the Youth Employment Solutions (YES!) Digital Ecosystem, which demonstrates how technology could be leveraged to improve the breadth and depth of skills development programs. Plan has also celebrated International Day of the Girl Child with ADB – first in 2013 with a film-screening of “Girl Rising: Educate Girls, Change the World”, and in 2018 with an Insight Thursday, where a young woman from Plan’s program was invited to share her insights on the challenges and aspirations that girls have in the Philippines.

Moreover, Plan has developed knowledge products with ADB, such as the “Voice of Youth Debate Guide” in 2015, and “What’s the Evidence? Youth and the Sustainable Development Goals” in 2017. ADB has also supported the launch of the Plan research, “Women in the Wind: Gender, Youth Economic Empowerment and Internal Economic Migration”.

DID YOU KNOW?

To date, there have been two Memorandums of Agreement signed between Plan and ADB. The first MOU covers activities that has been implemented in 2013-2016, specifically on Youth Participation and Engagement in Key Sectoral Knowledge Events; Project Implementation; and Greater Knowledge Generation and Sharing.

The second MOU (2017-2020) was signed in April 2016 for extending collaboration on focused initiatives related to Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Economic Growth; Environment and Climate Change; Gender and Disability Mainstreaming; Private Sector Development; Increased Knowledge Solutions; and Strengthening ADB’s Role as Project Developer. The latest MOU also facilitated the secondment of a Plan staff to support greater mainstreaming and influencing of Plan’s work in several ADB projects, and deepening of ADB’s thinking on youth engagement and youth employment issues.

Plan’s Secondment to ADB

In September 2017, Plan seconded an ADB Policy and Partnership Advisor to ADB as part of the Memorandum of Agreement for 2016-2020. The secondee was tasked to contribute to wider institutionalized youth engagement efforts within ADB, as well as leveraging resources that supported the piloting and scale innovative solutions on youth employment, gender and climate change, among others. Specific examples of this work include the coordination of a knowledge partnership using the YES!DIGITAL Ecosystem to monitor an ADB pilot project in Indonesia, and a pilot of Plan’s digital tools with educational institutions in the Pacific through ADB’s High Level Technology Fund (HLTF).



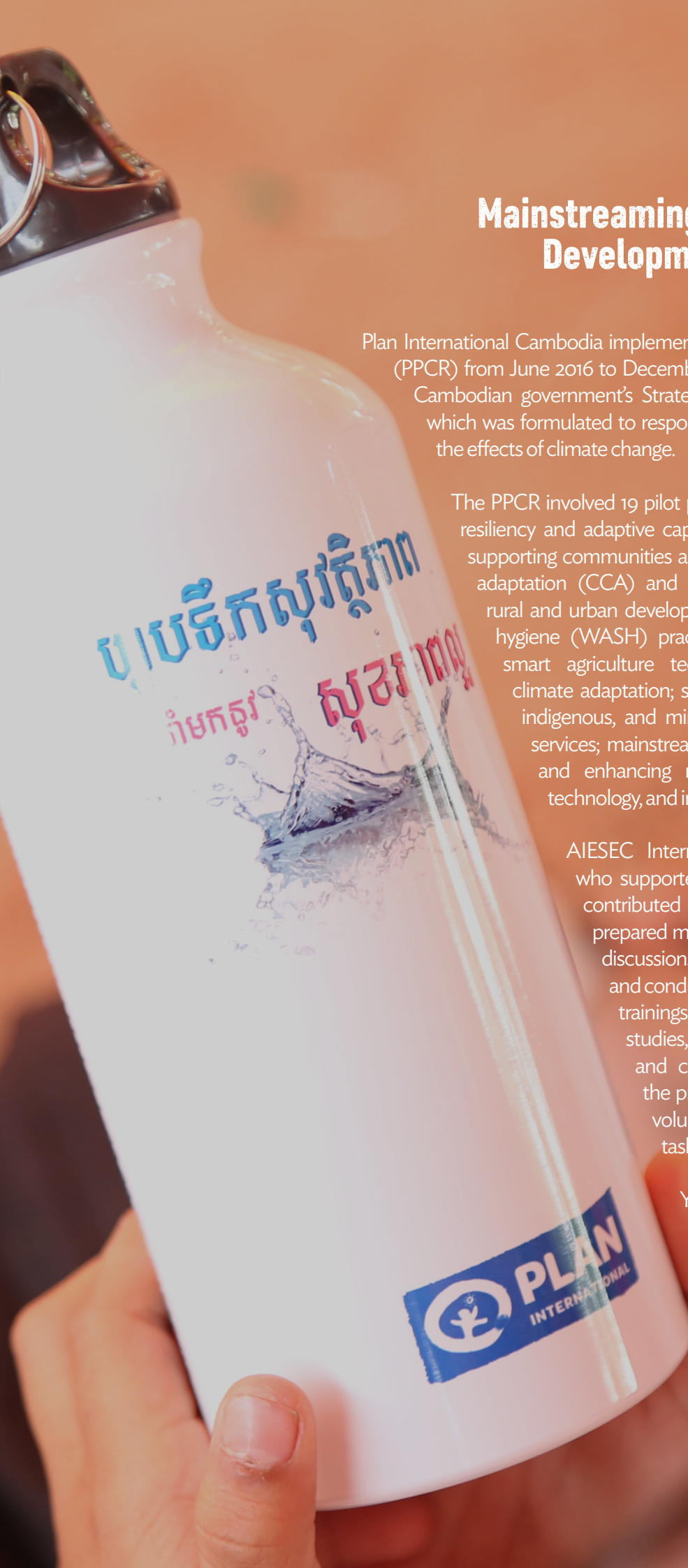
CASE STUDY: Mainstreaming Climate Resilience Into Development Planning - Cambodia

Plan International Cambodia implemented the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) from June 2016 to December 2017. The PPCR was a component of the Cambodian government's Strategy Program for Climate Resilience (SPCR), which was formulated to respond to the country's increasing vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

The PPCR involved 19 pilot projects which aimed to increase the climate resiliency and adaptive capabilities of communities. This was done by supporting communities and CSOs towards integrating climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) actions into rural and urban development plans; improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices and infrastructure; adopting climate-smart agriculture techniques; understanding gender sensitive climate adaptation; supporting alternative livelihoods for women, indigenous, and minority groups; increasing access to financial services; mainstreaming CCA and DRR into schools' curricula; and enhancing natural resource management, agricultural technology, and irrigation.

AIIESEC International mobilized eight youth volunteers who supported the implementation of the project. They contributed to the execution of project action plans; prepared materials for field visits; facilitated activities and discussions among community members; participated in and conducted vulnerability and risk assessment (VRA) trainings; assisted Plan International staff in doing case studies, translations, minute-taking, and reporting; and crafted posters and various documents for the projects. Plan staff shared that they valued the volunteers' versatility and commitment to the tasks given.

Youth volunteers also appreciated Plan International's professionalism and mentorship. One of them remarked: *"Plan International has done a good job. I want to be able to continue being part of it after my internship comes to an end."*



CASE STUDY:

Emergency Assistance and Early Recovery for Poor Municipalities Affected By Typhoon Yolanda

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan (locally referred to as Typhoon Yolanda), cut a swath of destruction across the central part of the Philippines. It left behind more than 6,000 casualties and devastated the lives of 14 million people, including 6 million children. One year later, majority of those who have been displaced and affected were able to return to their homes but thousands of Filipinos were still in displacement sites, tented camps, transitional shelters or evacuation centers.

The Asian Development Bank provided a comprehensive package of assistance to support reconstruction. It included a grant from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR), which aimed to “provide livelihood restoration and basic health services support for improved resilience to disasters and project management” (ADB, 2014). Plan implemented a sub-component of the JFPR project, providing support to recovery and reconstruction efforts through (1) cash-to-work programs to re-establish livelihoods; (2) trainings through livelihood diversification, provision of farming and fishing inputs, and strengthening community-based enterprise development (CBED); (3) reconstruction and rehabilitation of destroyed primary and damaged school classrooms; and (4) capacity building to improve disaster resilience and adaptation in communities and schools.

The project resulted in the creation of sustainable livelihood options; involvement of vulnerable groups in community risk management planning; and promoted the access to labor market opportunities for vulnerable and marginalized populations. In addition, Plan had ensured the following:

- 201 skills development trainings were conducted for out-of-school youth;
- 163 young people received training and linked with potential employers;
- 31 school risk assessments were conducted; and
- 32 camp coordination and camp management workshops were held.



CHRONOLOGY OF 2010-2020

PARTNERSHIP MILESTONES

2010

“Where are the Youth, Mr. President?”

In 2010, the Regional Director assigned Maja Cubarrubia, the Country Director of Plan International Thailand, to build a relationship with ADB. Maja’s main objective was to establish, strengthen and sustain the relationship between Plan and ADB.

Plan’s initial touch point was being introduced to Christopher Morris, the Head of ADB’s NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC). Maja was then invited to attend ADB’s 43rd Annual Board of Governors’ Meeting (AGM) held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where she was introduced to then-President of ADB, Mr. Haruhiko Kuroda through a meeting between CSOs and ADB management.

This was the opening for Plan to raise two points that were pivotal to establishing the Plan-ADB partnership: (1) the lack of representation of children and young people in ADB meetings and its overall strategic agenda; and (2) Plan’s offer to support ADB in engaging children and young people in their operations. Maja and Chris began their professional, albeit informal, relationship at that time to work towards delivering on this commitment.

2011

Voice of Youth at the 44th ADB Annual Meeting

Plan and ADB organized the first youth debates as part of the 44th Annual Board of Governors’ Meeting (AGM) Civil Society Program (CSP) in Hanoi, Vietnam. Youth debates brought together young people from Vietnam to showcase their knowledge and skills in constructively discussing major development issues. This was the first time ADB staff and project officers participated in a youth-focused segment of the CSP.

2012

Voice of Youth 2.0 at the 45th ADB Annual Meeting

Continuing the trend of engaging young people through the ADB’s Annual Meeting Civil Society Program, the Plan Philippines mobilized 14 Plan young people and staff members to support ADB’s 45th Annual Meeting held in Manila, Philippines. The youth contingent created written content, blogs and communications about the AGM Civil Society Program. Plan also organized the second Voice of Youth Debates, this time engaging local Philippine universities as part of the CSP, which was well attended by AGM guests and delegates.

Watch the debate [here](#).

2013

1st Memorandum of Understanding between Plan and ADB

Plan and ADB’s institutional partnership was formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed in April 2013. The MOU defined the cooperation of both Plan and ADB from 2013 to 2016, and focused on sharing the experiences of engaging and promoting the participation of youth in issues and programs that affect them. The partnership was launched in October 2013 at ADB Headquarters in Manila, Philippines with senior management from both organizations, led by Plan Deputy CEO Tjipke Bergsma and ADB Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department Director General Woonchong, in attendance.

2014



“Youth as Partners, not just Beneficiaries”

In 2014, NGOC branded its youth engagement work under the name “The ADB Youth Initiative”, bolstered by ADB’s growing youth-related efforts and Plan’s commitment and support. The ADB Youth Initiative and its ongoing partnership with Plan evolved into a platform where young people were heard and contributed to policy discussions and ADB projects. NGOC also engaged its first youth consultant, whose primary role was in finding opportunities for young people to provide inputs into ADB projects and technical assistance, as a result of Plan and ADB’s sustained engagements and discussions towards expanding youth participation in ADB’s sector and thematic areas.

Implementation of the Haiyan Emergency Response Project

Plan implemented a sub-component of a Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction project that supported restoration and resilience activities in communities that were devastated by Typhoon Haiyan. The sub-component focused on providing support to recovery and reconstruction efforts. This was the first project that Plan implemented after the formalization of its partnership with ADB.

A Growing Youth Initiative

Plan and ADB continued to collaborate in empowering young people in the Asia and the Pacific region. Through the ADB Youth Initiative and its new institutional partner, AIESEC, the world’s largest youth organization, ADB was able to expand its youth team to accommodate more youth consultants within ADB, who were tasked to work directly with ADB Project Officers in integrating youth engagement components into projects.

By 2015, YfA had supported youth debates in seven countries, and begun the development of the Voice of Youth Debate Guide, which offered tips and resources for ADB staff in organizing youth debates and working with young people on these events.

Youth Volunteers in a Plan-ADB Climate Resilience Project

Plan supported the mobilization and placement of eight youth volunteers, who contributed to the implementation of the Mainstreaming Climate Resilience Into Development Planning project in Cambodia. This was the first project that YfA implemented with Plan, which also featured specific roles for young people in a project life cycle.

“Youth Initiative” to “Youth for Asia”

The Youth Initiative was rebranded into Youth for Asia as more of ADB’s work grew along with the youth contingency within the Bank. ADB Youth for Asia (YfA) and Plan International share the goal of mainstreaming youth into ADB projects. In 2016, YfA and Plan facilitated the design, funding and implementation of youth components in ADB projects.

Before its rebranding, in 2015 the ADB Youth Initiative had contributed to over 50 policy dialogues, capacity-building activities, and knowledge programs in 15 countries; forged partnerships with more than 30 organizations, and empowered over 5,000 youth across the region.

2015



ADB 2016



2017

Financing partnership for innovations in education

To promote youth employability in the 21st century labor market, ADB and Plan conceptualized a partnership mechanism that would pool funding and resources from stakeholders to support innovative pilots in education, youth employment and youth empowerment. In addition, Plan and YfA began exploring opportunities to integrate youth activities into several education projects. At this time, Plan had also been invited on several occasions to present the YES!DIGITAL Ecosystem and how these different tools could facilitate youth participation in a youth employment project life cycle, as well as improve the breadth and depth of the project itself.

The 2nd Plan International-ADB MOU

In March 2017, Plan and ADB signed and launched a Memorandum of Understanding, which built on the key achievements of the previous MOU as well as expanded the breadth and depth of the existing relationship between both organizations. The next phase of ADB and Plan International's collaboration focuses on initiatives in the following areas of work:

- Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Economic Growth
- Environment and Climate Change
- Gender and Disability Mainstreaming
- Private Sector Development
- Increased Knowledge Solutions
- Strengthening ADB Role as Project Developer

At the launch of the second MOU, Plan had also mobilized young people to participate in the screening of *Girl Rising*, as well as in the launch of the *Women in the Wind* publication.

50th ADB Annual Board of Governors' Meeting and 5th Asian Youth Forum

The 5th Asian Youth Forum was organized in conjunction with the 50th ADB Annual Board of Governors' Meeting (AGM) in Yokohama, Japan. Plan provided significant support, including technical assistance and resources, to ensure young people were involved in both events and to implement a design challenge, where youth participants worked with ADB project officers to look at existing projects and introduce youth components into them.

At the Civil Society Program of the AGM, YfA and Plan organized the session "Social Inclusivity in the Age of Prosperity: The Case of Asia and Pacific Youth", which highlighted specific examples of how young people have contributed to the progress of their communities and countries. It was at this event that ADB senior officials publicly affirmed their continued support of YfA and the institutionalization of youth engagement within ADB.

What's the Evidence? Youth and the Sustainable Development Goals

Plan, ADB and AIESEC conducted a research of youth-led initiatives in Indonesia and the Philippines that provided evidence of the roles and contributions young people had in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The research also included policy and program recommendations to inform decision-makers and support wider youth engagement across sectors. The research was completed in 2018, and launched in 2019.



2018

Pivoting to Youth Empowerment, Education and Employment

ADB's youth work shifted in focus towards youth employment due to a new Technical Assistance (TA) agreement, "Demonstrating Innovative Employment Solutions through Regional Knowledge-Sharing Partnerships with Youth Organizations". The TA sought to develop and engage young people in the Asia-Pacific region by improving their employability and preparing them for future work. This also served as an opportunity for Plan to continue leveraging its expertise and supporting ADB's youth work through its institutional knowledge, technical tools and best practices on implementing youth employment solutions and programs.

Secondment to ADB

In 2018, the secondment was formally embedded within the NGO and Civil Society Center and served as a unique collaboration opportunity between ADB and Plan.

"How does the ADB feel about working with CSOs to tackle aspects of gender inequality in ADB projects?"

At the 51st ADB Annual Board of Governors' Meeting - Civil Society Program, Plan International had the opportunity to ask ADB President Takehiko Nakao about ADB's willingness to work with civil society organizations (CSOs) in addressing the root causes of gender inequality. Plan had emphasized the importance of understanding the drivers of inequality, and improving the value of girls and women in society rather than focusing solely on addressing physical barriers. President Nakao affirmed ADB's commitment to partner with CSOs in order to achieve Strategy 2030 and its Operating Priorities (OP), especially OP 2 on gender.

Technical Assistance on Youth Employment Innovations in Asia-Pacific

NGOC and YfA began developing a Technical Assistance (TA) that focused on demonstrating innovative solutions to addressing youth employment challenges through regional knowledge-sharing partnerships with youth-serving and youth-led organizations in the region. The TA was approved in mid-2018, and enabled the creation of a pilot demonstration of Plan's YES!DIGITAL Ecosystem in Indonesia.

The Incheon Youth Declaration for the Future of Work

Plan and ADB co-organized the 6th Asian Youth Forum in Incheon, South Korea, where at least 200 youth participants from 27 countries in the Asia-Pacific region gathered to discuss the challenges, trends and opportunities that the Fourth Industrial Revolution brought. Youth participants developed a youth declaration, which included a call to action for stakeholders to address decent work and inclusion; facilitating education-to-work transitions; fostering youth entrepreneurship; and preparing for the jobs of the future, among others. Read the Incheon Youth Declaration [here](#).



2019

Destination Equal: The Road to Gender Equality

At the 52nd ADB Annual Board of Governors' Meeting in Nadi, Fiji, Plan organized a session that examined the barriers that impede girls in the Pacific from acquiring the skills to access decent work, and break out of poverty. The panel comprised of a diverse range of speakers, including representatives of grassroots CSOs, training centers, youth organizations, and ADB. The discussions highlighted the need for investing in girls' economic empowerment to enable them to lead, decide, and thrive. In addition, the panelists explored practical solutions to bring women's empowerment to a greater level.



2019

52nd ADB ANNUAL MEETING
1-5 MAY





CHAPTER 2

Building Bridges for Partnerships

This section provides an overview of the approach that has guided the ADB-Plan partnership, as well as the different tools and templates that the reader can use in their own engagements with multilateral development banks (MDBs) and similar stakeholders.

Partnership Principles

The approach that Plan and ADB have taken to work together can be broadly summarized into six (6) principles as follows:

- Start with the “Why”
- Know your strengths and priorities
- Know your prospective MDB’s priorities
- Relationship building is key
- Determine the nature of the partnership from the beginning
- Clarify the terms of the partnership

Principle #1: Start with the “Why”

The motivation for partnering must be clear from the very beginning. A clear purpose serves as the foundation for the outcomes, activities, and success of the partnership.

The Plan-ADB partnership had the common objective of ensuring young people in Asia-Pacific were involved in decisions that ultimately affected their lives. Having this purpose clarified at the beginning helped determine the approach and initiatives that both organizations took to strengthen their relationship over the years.

Plan saw the strategic value of sharing its extensive experience in fostering youth participation with global institutions and influential development actors as a way to position the organization as the partner of choice for youth engagement issues. Decision-makers in Plan recognized the influence of international institutions, such as ADB, in shaping regional and national public policies in Asia-Pacific, and the potential far-reaching impact of ADB advocating for young people’s participation in development issues in the region. When the vision for a potential engagement with ADB was crystallized, members of the Plan Asia team made their first visit to the ADB Headquarters to introduce Plan’s programs, and the rest was history.

Tool 1: A Partnership Vision Statement Template⁸

A tool that could be used for answering the critical question of “Why partner with an MDB?”, is the **Vision Statement template**.

A vision statement describes your organization’s unique aspirations and should, therefore, be precise and aligned with your core values. Because a vision statement depicts the broad, long-term vision, it should present optimistic, but realistic expectations. Above all, the values that you convey must be relatable.

For the Plan-ADB partnership, the vision statement was:

“By 2030, young people in Asia and the Pacific are empowered, recognized and engaged as partners in development issues.”

Here are a couple of things to consider when developing your vision statement:

- **Focus on the Future:** Describe your aspirations for how the organization and its partner should look and feel in the future and what it should accomplish.
- **Specify a Clear Vision:** Provide direction that is clear and focused enough to shape decision making between partnering organizations. Make the statement concise and easy to read and remember.
- **Broaden the Scope:** At the same time, a vision should be general enough to encompass changing possibilities.
- **Make It Achievable:** A vision should not be abstract and lofty as to never be attainable. Set deadlines and timebound deliverables and objectives and stick to these timelines.
- **Make It Inspiring:** Members of your organization and outside stakeholders should be inspired to extend themselves and organization resources in order to achieve a greater goal.
- **Find Something Stable:** Your vision statement should define a goal that has a reasonable expectation of success despite economic, technological, or other shifts.
- **Pinpoint a Date:** Specify the future date by which the organization should have achieved the goal.
- **Include Relevant Goals and Values:** Ensure that the statement applies to current and foreseeable efforts and challenges.

YOUR PARTNERSHIP VISION STATEMENTS

⁸Understanding SWOT Analysis, SmartSheets Patents, 2019.

Principle 2: Know your strengths and priorities

Establishing a partnership with a multilateral development bank (MDB) requires a clear understanding of the in-house expertise and organizational strengths that could be leveraged. As in any other partnership, each organization brings its own resources, which varies from technical expertise and funding to reputation and credibility with other stakeholders (e.g. government, private sector, communities, youth).

Plan assessed what it could offer to a potential ADB partnership, and identified as strengths its technical expertise in youth engagement, youth employment, gender and climate change, among others; geographic presence in the region, especially in countries where ADB works; and reputation as a children's rights-focused organization with technical programs in line with ADB's portfolio.

PITSTOP

Tool 2: Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis Template⁹

In some cases, the strengths and priorities of an organization, as well as opportunities or “entry points” for engaging potential partners, have already been laid out. But in other cases, there needs to be a discussion of what those are. A tool for such purposes is the **SWOT Analysis**.

A SWOT analysis can be used as part of project management, organizational change, individual development or any situation requiring strategic planning to reach an objective.

Strengths and Weaknesses - These are internal factors, which may include financial resources, processes and systems; and elements such as organizational culture, certifications, reputation, and leadership. It is important to remember that what constitutes a strength or weakness will depend on the objective you are assessing.

Opportunities and Threats - The external elements influencing your business may include market trends, outside funding, customer demographics, suppliers, the economic climate, political and environmental issues, and other factors. The analysis can help identify new business opportunities and areas for growth as well as issues that could hinder a partnership endeavor.

INTERNAL FACTORS	
STRENGTHS (+)	WEAKNESSES (-)
EXTERNAL FACTORS	
OPPORTUNITIES (+)	THREATS (-)

⁹Understanding SWOT Analysis, SmartSheets Patents, 2019.

Principle #3: Know your prospective MDB partner's priorities

As with any other partner, it is critical to have a clear understanding of MDBs – what they are, how they work and what they prioritize, among others. This entails mapping out the geographic, sectoral and thematic focus and priorities of the MDB.

ADB receives diverse feedback from a range of stakeholders and Plan has taken the opportunity to provide ADB with solutions to common challenges – a value-proposition that carved out a space and role for their engagement. Furthermore, the organization aligned its own mandate of empowering the present and future generations with ADB's mandate of sustainably eliminating poverty in the region.

While this had been where Plan and ADB's shared values began to develop, it was equally important to ensure that these shared values led to outcomes. Consequently, Plan and ADB needed to invest in the partnership, particularly each

organization's resources, time and expertise, among others. Plan and ADB ensured that there were resources to support young people's presence in the spaces and venues where they were beginning to matter to ADB. Plan also shared its knowledge, expertise and tools in the sector and thematic areas where it had more experience in, specifically, youth employment, ICT, gender and climate change. Meanwhile, ADB helped connect Plan to project officers and senior management who could take these technical inputs and effectively integrate them into its strategy, operational plans, and work on-the-ground.

The prerequisite to knowing where Plan could align and how to support such alignment with ADB, however, was knowing who ADB was.

The [Primer on Multilateral Development Banks](#) is a good place to start understanding MDBs and the role they play in development. A list of multilateral development banks is also available in **Annex A**.

PITSTOP

Tool 3: Organizational Context Tool¹²

Once you know what MDBs do, you can use the **Organizational Context tool** to help identify issues that could impact the development and focus of the partnership. The tool can be used to develop an understanding of how both organizations work; identify risks to fulfilling a proposed partnership; and identify strengths that each partner could bring.

When working in partnership, consider how the relationship fits with the ongoing work of each partner organization and the capacity that is required of each party to make the relationship work. When you use this tool, make sure to consider the impacts of the partnership that could extend across the organization. Therefore, impact on other areas need to be considered. Identify the key factors in relation to the desired purpose of the potential partnership.

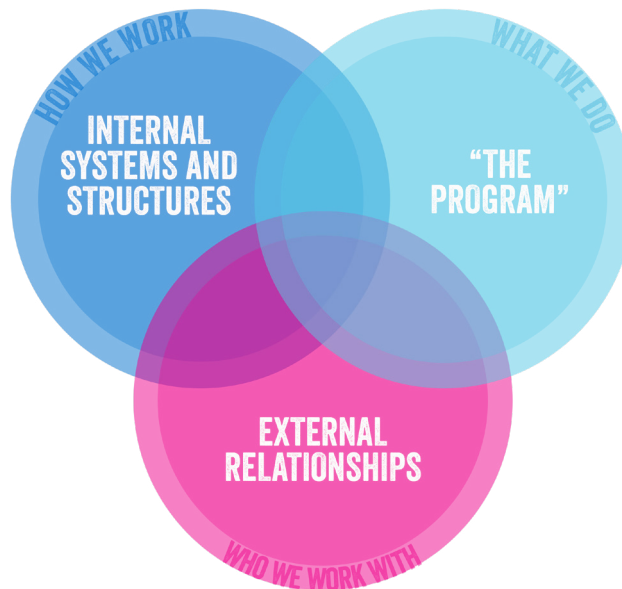
Explore the linkages between the three circles and outline the different organizational issues that could impact on the partnership – strengths that you have to offer to a partnership, and potential risks (e.g. capacity gaps, impacts on other relationships that your organization or office has).

¹⁰ Asian Development Bank. (2008). Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank 2008-2020.

¹¹ Asian Development Bank. (2008). Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank 2008-2020.

¹² The Partnership Toolbox. Rod Sterne, Deborah Heaney and Bruce Britton. World Wildlife Fund UK. 2018

Organizational Context Tool



Tool 4: The Partnership Assessment Table

Another tool you can choose to use in assessing whether you should pursue a partnership with an MDB is the **Partnership Assessment Table**.

KEY PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES					
ADB	To what extent does each organization exhibit the following partnership characteristics or principles?				Plan International
	1-5	6-10	6-10	1-5	
Promote accountability and transparency					Mutual respect and listening
Allow for participation at all levels					Knowing your partner
Make participation accessible to all					Clearly define objectives and non-negotiables
Value diversity					Sharing responsibility
Ensure participation is voluntary					Learning from each other
Encourage stakeholders to create their own ideas and solutions					Common Sense

Principle #4: Relationship-building is key

The best way to establish a relationship with an MDB is organically and without expressing overt fundraising agenda. This relationship must be built with the right people or “champions” within the MDB who can lobby for the shared vision. A starting point in identifying ‘champions’ is by mapping out the key persons in the MDB you are looking to establish a partnership with. This is important because when an NGO is unable to adequately grasp the specific dynamics and personalities, the extent of their influence, and politics between and within departments in an MDB, the NGO may target the wrong “champion” within the organization.

It is also worth noting that people make or break the partnership. How these individuals relate to each other will determine the nature of the partnership. The Plan – ADB relationship has been led and continues to be led by highly capable, professional, determined but fiercely loyal, patient, and trustworthy individuals. These people understand the value of their commitments, have been willing to adapt and find productive areas of compromise and work towards a solution that account for both partners’ welfare and priorities.

Furthermore, relationships imply a long-term commitment to see the partnership through. What this underscores is the importance of succession planning. Highly capable individuals drive partnerships. But relationships that stand the test of time depend on the ability of both organizations to consistently involve staff who understand the dynamics of the partnership and possess the abilities and mindset to keep it alive. For something novel to be done in an institution such as ADB, it will require partnership managers, stakeholders and “champions”

within the institutions who have both the character and the mindset to navigate the intricacies, dynamics, and highs-and-lows of a partnership, as well as the ability to manage transitions when key staff move on.

Despite institutional, political, and cultural hurdles, resistance, and skepticism within such institutions, it is crucial for the partnership managers to persevere. This means being able to work within the organizational limitations from both sides of the partnership to push an agenda through to its intended outcomes. While ADB is known for its thorough processes, Plan also needs to navigate its own systems in the course of building its relationship with ADB and identify champions from within the organization to support the partnership.

It is also important to remember that as in any kind of relationship, impressions last, especially bad ones. ADB values performance, hierarchy, and quality service delivery. NGO staff working with an MDB need to take this responsibility seriously and understand the repercussions of failing to deliver on formal agreements, or of discussing issues without the credibility to support them.

Finally, any NGO staff working with MDBs have to be careful about overdoing any advocacy towards an MDB. NGOs tend to be criticized for being overtly aggressive about their advocacy, which may not be conducive for starting relationships with potential and existing champions. Reduce “flag waving” and instead strengthen strategic ways of influencing and leveraging points of genuine strength. This is an approach that needs to be clearly communicated across the whole NGO.

PITSTOP

Tool 5: Champion Mapping Analysis Template

A useful tool in identifying champions to engage within the organization and with the partner MDB is the **Champion Mapping Analysis Template**. Identify champions within the organization and categorize them by their level of influence and impact on your organization’s partnership objectives.

Once the “Champions” have been identified, determine the following information for each:

- What level of **influence** does this champion or person have in general and with regard to my communication activities?
- How can this stakeholder directly **impact** the outcomes of the project?
- What are their **interests** in lobbying for this partnership in the MDB?
- What are the best ways to engage with this specific champion / person?

Once the “Champions” have been identified, determine the following information for each:

- What level of **influence** does this champion or person have in general and with regard to my communication activities?
- How can this stakeholder directly **impact** the outcomes of the project?
- What are their **interests** in lobbying for this partnership in the MDB?
- What are the best ways to engage with this specific champion / person?

Champion Mapping Template

Champions	Influence	Impact	Interest	Engagement

Principle #5: Determine the nature of the partnership from the beginning

When deciding to ‘partner’ with an MDB, there should be a mutual understanding of the relationship that is being developed together. Oftentimes, it is far more meaningful to have a partnership that transcends fundraising objectives – the same thing that Plan had set out to do with ADB.

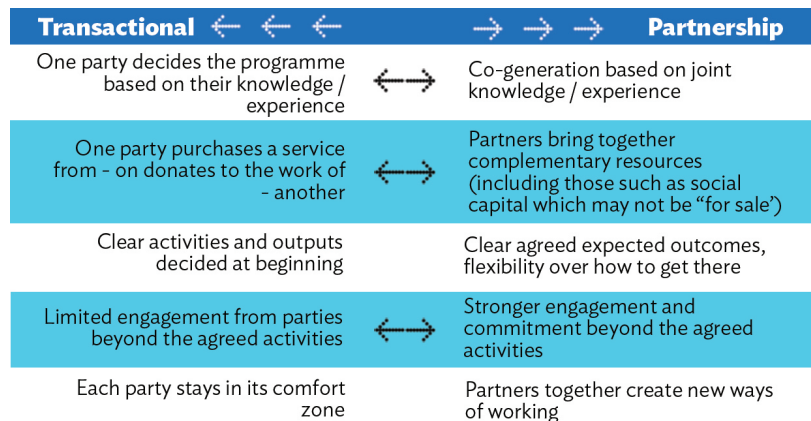
ADB staff shared that Plan’s approach to see ADB as more than “a Bank” set it apart from other organizations. Plan was not interested in simply fundraising through the support of ADB but was willing to put in its own organizational resources to invest in building the relationship. Whether supporting the mobilization costs of engaging young people in certain activities, co-financing a knowledge event or providing technical oversight and input to a project, Plan understood that a meaningful and sustainable partnership entailed sharing its resources. Making such investments in the partnership required confidence that these would result in future dividends for the work of Plan, ADB and young people of the region.



Tool 6: The Relationship/Partnership Spectrum¹³

The **Relationship/Partnership Spectrum tool** discusses the continuum of relationships between organizations, and can help contextualize this principle further.

This tool shows a continuum of relationships from ‘transactional’ to a genuine ‘partnership’. Each end of the spectrum will have its advantages and disadvantages and there is no value judgement intended on where in the spectrum a relationship would best fit – it all depends on context. Use it as a reference when deciding how you want to work with an MDB.



Advantages



Principle #6: Clarify and evaluate the terms of the partnership

Relationships between organizations are less likely to encounter difficulties if the parties concerned establish a clear and comprehensive agreement about how they intend to cooperate. The roles, responsibilities, expectations, redressal mechanisms and other factors that support the partnership must be clearly defined, agreed upon by the partners, and periodically re-evaluated at crucial points in the partnership. Pain points and strains to the relationship must also be raised at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

It is also important to take opportunities to substantiate the value of the relationship, celebrating wins, and learning and recovering from set-backs. In the context of the Plan-ADB partnership, the space given for young people has

evidently grown significantly through the years as a result of the collaboration between Plan and ADB. From participating in small policy debates and dialogues among older individuals to convening larger youth representation in subsequent forums, the success the partnership has now is a cumulative result of small but meaningful wins.

However, while there is an understanding between Plan and ADB Youth for Asia on how to relate to young people, perceptions persist that youth stakeholders should only be seen as beneficiaries. Plan and ADB have room for more work in persuading skeptics and pushing the case for young people as partners in development.

¹³The Partnering Initiative. (2019). Partnership Support Tools

Tool 7: The Partnership Agreement Checklist¹⁴

The **Partnership Agreement Checklist** serves as a tool to discuss the terms of the partnership with the MDB, and can also be used to ensure that the critical areas of cooperation are being discussed and regularly clarified.

<p>Statement of intent What is the vision for the joint work and for maintaining high standards of quality?</p>
<p>Parties involved Who are the parties involved in the partnership? What can be done to reduce redundancy?</p>
<p>Objectives of the partnership What is the partnership supposed to achieve?</p>
<p>Values and principles What are each organizations' values and principles? What are non-negotiable expectations?</p>
<p>Mutual trust and respect What will be the agreed indicators of mutual trust and respect?</p>
<p>Description of partnership What type of partnership is being proposed?</p>
<p>Roles What roles, rights, obligations and responsibilities does each party have?</p>
<p>Sign-off procedure Who will be the named persons in each organization with the authority for approving action?</p>
<p>Monitoring progress How will the development of the partnership itself be monitored?</p>
<p>Opportunities to develop and expand How and by whom will decisions be made about developing the partnership?</p>

¹⁴ Rod Sterne, Deborah Heaney and Bruce Britton. World Wildlife Fund UK. (2018). The Partnership Toolbox

Tool 8: Partnership Analysis Tool

In evaluating the partnership, a tool you can use is the **Partnership Analysis Tool**. It describes the components of a partnership for you to assess the dynamics of your partnership with. Using this tool is helpful in answering questions related to the direction of the partnership, and whether there needs to be some changes to further strengthen your relationship with the MDB.

Key Components of a Partnership	ADB-Plan Partnership <i>(repopulate to use tool)</i>
<p>Leadership. Partnerships imply a shared leadership among respected individuals who are recognized and empowered by their own organizations and trusted by partners to build consensus and resolve conflicts.</p>	<p>The partnership has management support from both parties. At the implementation level, the Head of ADB NGOC and Plan’s appointed Partnership Manager/s have been entrusted the management of the MOU stipulations, agree on actions and resolve issues.</p>
<p>Common Understanding. A common understanding of the framework, culture, values, and approach of partner organizations needs to exist. Also important is a clear understanding of individual members’ roles and responsibilities regarding the division of labor.</p>	<p>It took time to learn and understand the Bank language, culture and system. Nevertheless, Plan staff patiently and quietly observed and learned how the Bank works, how decisions are made, and what power dynamics existed among internal actors. ADB NGOC was essential in educating the Plan staff who were involved in the partnership. Outside of NGOC and several senior management, few ADB personnel know about Plan and its relationship with ADB.</p>
<p>Purpose. A shared common vision and purpose that builds trust and openness and recognizes the value and contribution of all members also needs to exist. Additionally, shared and transparent decision-making processes—extending the scope of influence over and involvement with other services and activities—will prove essential to your partnership. Shared goals and aims, understood and accepted as being important by each partner, lead to improved coordination of policies, programs, and service delivery, and, ultimately, better outcomes.</p>	<p>The inclusion of young people into the Bank’s policies, operations and projects is the common vision of the partnership.</p> <p>Building a relationship and rapport among those involved in the partnership has helped in this area. At the start of the relationship, the Head of NGOC would sit down with the Plan partnership manager and draw up a joint plan for the year agreeing on who is doing what.</p>
<p>Culture and Values. Shared can-do values, understanding, and an acceptance of differences are all key components of a successful partnership. Having respect for the contributions of all partners, combined with an absence of status barriers, will lead to the active involvement of members who are identified as being effective, representative, and capable of playing a valued role in the partnership.</p>	<p>Learning the work style of the various people has helped the relationship between the two organizations. Patience, respect and tolerance have paved the way to accepting and respecting the differences.</p>

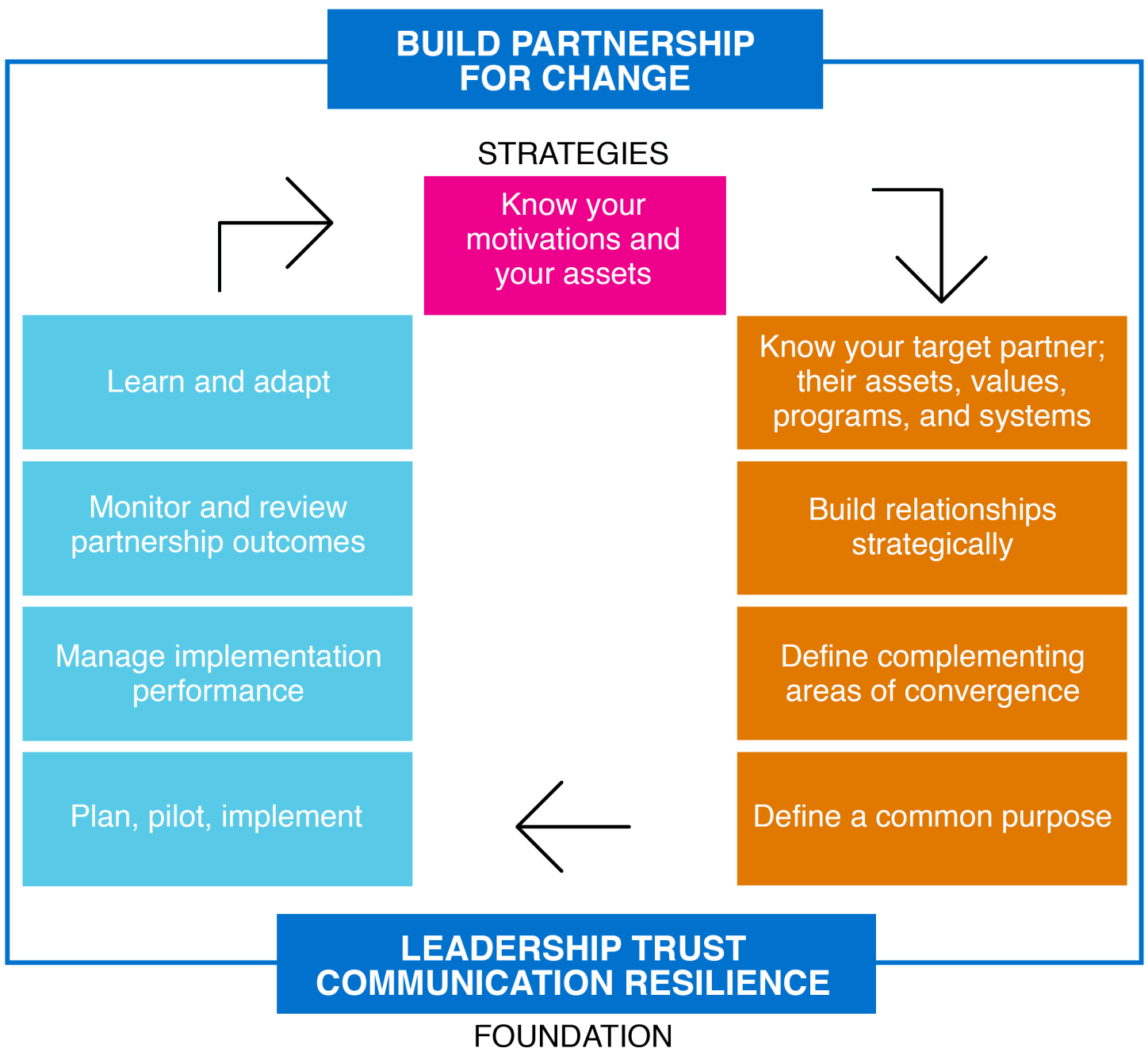
Key Components of Most Common Approaches to Partnership	ADB-Plan Partnership (repopulate to use tool)
<p>Learning and Development. A healthy partnership promotes an atmosphere of learning. This may involve monitoring and evaluation aimed at improving members' performance. Investing in partner skills, knowledge, and competence needs to be highly valued within the partnership. This open mindset and spirit of facilitation creates opportunities to shape each other's work and learn together. In this environment, members can more effectively reflect on both developmental successes and failures.</p>	<p>The partnership has enabled Plan and ADB to learn from each other. ADB has expanded their reach to young people and other NGOs, and further explored out-of-the-box approaches to development, which strengthened grassroots programs and civil society engagement, among others. Plan has gained a better understanding of multilateral development banks and how to work in partnership with similar actors to foster enabling environments for young people in the region.</p>
<p>Communication. If a partnership is going to succeed in the area of communication, strong feedback loops are required. Effective communication at all levels within the partnership and within partner organizations, sharing in accessing all knowledge and information needs to exist.</p>	<p>Both organizations have been generous in sharing knowledge and information with each other. The area that may need improvement is performance feedback. While personal relationships have helped the communications between parties, one ADB staff said that such a relationship can potentially hinder honest critiquing of each other's performance.</p>
<p>Performance Management. Performance Management practices and resources are required to achieve the partnership goals and complement the intended purpose of the partnership. Specifically, members must demonstrate accountability for the actions they take and ownership of delivery of the objectives and targets for which they are responsible.</p>	<p>Plan and ADB have set performance goals throughout the length of the partnership. At times this process has been informal while at others quite structured. The secondee role provides a continuous link through day to day engagement which has been seen to replace previous performance approaches. Going forward previous approaches might be re-established to add additional structure in addition to the secondment.</p>



POTENTIAL FRAMEWORK FOR AN NGO-MDB PARTNERSHIP

Fostering an NGO-MDB partnership may follow a broad framework, as illustrated below. The steps begin with a clear goal of building a partnership for positive social change. The two important features of this framework are the Foundations, and Strategic Steps of a partnership. As seen in the Plan-ADB partnership narrative and its lessons, laying the relational and institutional groundwork of the partnership was ultimately sustained by strong relationships, as well as a common purpose.

The framework is not intended to be restrictive. Partnerships may start at different points, and may instead require adapted mechanisms. What is paramount in this framework is that in every partnership, the goal, the individuals and the strategies must be clearly defined.



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ADB

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Regional Youth Employment Specialist,
Plan International

PROSPERITY

THE BENEFITS OF THE P

For the Asian Development Bank

The Plan-ADB partnership is a testament to making unique and innovative institutional relationships possible. ADB, particularly for its work with young people, was able to utilize Plan's years of institutional knowledge and development experience. This expertise has supported ADB's youth work in areas such as youth empowerment, youth employment, ICT, gender, and climate change, among others.

Plan has been able to leverage its strong grassroots presence and initiatives across program countries, which provide additional reach for ADB for activities undertaken within the framework of the partnership. Networks enable ADB to engage with more local entities without coming in as an unknown organization. Plan's existing work in these communities serve as a strategic channel for ADB to deepen its work with civil society.

Furthermore, Plan's agility and innovative character has helped ADB pursue new ways and approaches to project implementation, including introducing technological solutions to support projects. With Plan, ADB was able to identify, highlight, and operationalize the role of young people as partners in achieving a sustainable and inclusive Asia and the Pacific.



PLAN-ADB PARTNERSHIP

For Plan International

Plan's ongoing relationship with ADB has led to greater opportunities for the organization to develop and strengthen its understanding of the operations of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs). Plan has been able to leverage its experience with ADB in its engagement with other MDBs, such as with the World Bank's Solutions for Youth Employment (S4YE). ADB has also provided Plan opportunities to showcase its expertise to a broad external and ADB audience, including ADB project officers, and sector and thematic specialists.

Plan has managed to gain institutional recognition within ADB as a tried and tested authority on youth engagement. Plan has also leveraged its own technical expertise towards unlocking and tapping into more strategic financing opportunities – for example, an ADB-funded technical assistance which has led to alternative opportunities to expand Plan's work and influencing beyond the youth focus.

The constant interaction between Plan and ADB has helped Plan staff learn how to better work and adapt to MDBs. This relationship has also opened more opportunities that could potentially lead to new partnerships between Plan and other MDBs or stakeholders (including the private sector and other international development institutions).



“ADB is a strong believer in the youth. We recognize that today’s youth are innovative, driven, and changemakers who can bring significant value to work across the region. Under ADB’s new Strategy, our engagement with youth has evolved from listening to their voices and dreams, to building their capacity and working with them on strengthening our operations.”

**Remarks by ADB President Takehiko Nakao at the Host Country Seminar
52nd ADB Annual Meeting on 2 May 2019 in Nadi, Fiji**



Recognize
and agile
to ADB's
by 2030,
listening
capacity and
actions”



CHAPTER 3

Catalyzing Wider Youth Engagement in ADB

Plan's support in ADB's journey to deepen youth engagement in ADB operations

Youth for Asia (YfA) reflects the evolution of young people's presence in ADB – “from listening to their voices and dreams to building their capacity and working with them on strengthening the Bank's operations,” as ADB President Nakao has said.

This evolution started in 2010 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where there were no young people in the highest and most notable ADB event, the Annual Board of Governors' Meeting. Fast forward nine years and ADB has an established Youth Initiative with its own Technical Assistance instrument on innovations for youth employment, as well as freshly recruited youth leaders and a youth engagement strategy to support its operations.

The ADB NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) has made notable achievements in persuading various departments, sectors and themes within the Bank to engage young people, and has been gaining recognition within the ADB as the technical experts on youth participation and engagement in various sector initiatives. Moreover, there has been a clear trajectory moving from awareness-raising events, to specific knowledge generation and events with deeper value, to direct youth engagement in ADB projects.

Plan has helped ADB on this trajectory through advice and support at a strategic level, mentoring at the level of individual young people, and exchange of ideas between young people from Plan and ADB. This has been reinforced by a strong three-way partnership between ADB, Plan and AIESEC. While AIESEC recruited young people directly into Youth for Asia, Plan has shown strong commitments to building the capacity of AIESEC as well as ADB on issues such as gender, youth employment, and youth safeguarding and empowerment.

“The Plan International partnership with ADB Youth for Asia has allowed for holistic engagement of youth in development projects. A case in point being ADB's Mainstreaming Climate Resilience into Development Planning project. Plan's direct oversight and support to the youth placed in this project through Youth for Asia, allowed for the youth to both meaningfully work as partners in the development process and have a learning experience that will allow them to be catalysts of change,” Youth for Asia's Project Design Team Manager, Shruti Mehta, remarked.

ADB Youth for Asia

The resulting model has Youth for Asia (YfA) offering a holistic model to support ADB project officers throughout the project cycle. YfA collaborates with partners, including Plan, and leverages the core competencies of these partners across sectors. YfA's work with Safetipin (see next page) is an example of a collaboration that demonstrates YfA's added benefits to ADB. Furthermore, the YfA team has served to strengthen ADB's communication and brand recall among the younger demographic of Asia and the Pacific. This has resulted in making ADB's work relevant and accessible to over 2.2 billion individuals in the region aged 30 and below.

YfA also mobilizes young people in ADB's Developing Member Countries as researchers, data gatherers, campaign disseminators as well as participants. The capacity of YfA members to organize large knowledge events in and beyond

ADB draws from years of being engaged precisely through these events. This exposure to knowledge sharing, convening and networking has helped Youth for Asia become an effective, innovative and capable team in planning and managing knowledge events which ADB's sector and thematic group continues to benefit from.

Moving forward, Youth for Asia is working to establish its identity within the Bank by continuing to demonstrate the value addition of their work. A critical element of this work is ensuring the inclusivity of youth engagement in ADB projects. This means that each Youth Project Designer bears the responsibility of coming up with ways to ensure the participation of marginalized and disadvantaged young people throughout the project life cycle as well.

CASE STUDY:

Driving social accountability through the use of ICT -- Manila and Hanoi

In 2016, Safetipin, an organization that created a mobile app to measure pedestrian safety, was invited to speak at one of ADB's knowledge-sharing events. After this event, YfA built collaborative relations with Safetipin, and helped them spearhead a pilot in Manila, where over 100 youth participants were mobilized to use this technology in order to conduct safety audits and crowdsource data on pedestrian safety. The data collected were then submitted to local government authorities for their action. YfA's partnership with Plan allowed YfA to reach out to a diverse range of partners in order to collect audits and facilitate the access to more robust knowledge, based on Plan's previous work in building safe cities for women and girls. Moreover, the evaluation of the pilot provided a deeper understanding of the highlights and challenges of the initiative, which then informed the scale and replication of the study for an ADB metro line project in Hanoi.



FINAL REFLECTIONS

Ultimately, partnerships are about long-term relationships that go beyond ad-hoc engagements or projects, where organizations “co-create opportunities, share risks and responsibilities, value interdependency, and undergo transformation”. Partnerships demonstrate efforts “identifying shared value and leveraging the combined strengths of each partner to achieve a level of impact that could not be accomplished independently”.

The Plan-ADB partnership began with youth engagement as an entry point for collaboration. Over time, as both organizations increasingly came to an understanding of the value that each party offered to the relationship, the partnership expanded to other areas that aligned with their strengths as well as facilitated organizational growth. By many standards, the Plan-ADB partnership reflects the core components that are foundational to an effective partnership. This is partly because it has set out to do something transformational. In fact, the strongest components of this partnership are the leadership of the staff involved, having a clear and common purpose, and continuous learning and development.

“Without Plan’s support to ADB NGOC, it is difficult to imagine that a youth program in ADB would get this far,” Ponce Samaniego, the first youth consultant at ADB, shared. *“To youth in general, the partnership has increased engagement and knowledge-sharing regarding development among youth...and gave the boost ADB needed to understand youth work, build its networks, and have legitimacy internally.”*

For 2019 and beyond, Plan and ADB embark on the path of deepening youth engagement in ADB. As of the publication of this report, YfA is in the middle of developing a strategy document that articulates the approaches ADB will take to ensure the participation of young people in relevant policies and programs in the region. YfA, with significant support from

Plan, is also pursuing a focused approach on youth economic empowerment, and in particular, applying a gender and inclusion lens to understand the specific barriers that impede the participation of young women in the labor market of today and of the future, as well as demonstrating the role of technological solutions such as the YES! Digital Ecosystem in increasing the breadth and depth of skills development initiatives. In addition, Youth for Asia continues to explore opportunities to decentralize youth engagement in ADB by linking young people with ADB Resident Missions (RMs) while externally working with Plan and AIESEC to bolster wider support for youth participation in global youth employment initiatives.

Plan will also continue to work with ADB on operationalizing Strategy 2030, specifically supporting Operational Plans (OPs) 1 and 2, which focuses on reducing remaining inequalities and gender inequalities.

While Plan and ADB have demonstrated the tremendous impact that the partnership has contributed to, especially in the lives of young people in the region, the road goes on and on, and much more are expected to come out of this relationship. Other MDBs can offer similar opportunities, which deserve being looked into and explored, so long as the reader bears in mind the principles and lessons that have been discussed in this report.

ANNEX 1

List of All Multilateral Development Banks¹⁴

Global development banks

- European Investment Bank (EIB)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- International Investment Bank (IIB)
- New Development Bank (NDB)
- OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)
- World Bank Group: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA)

Regional development banks

- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Asian Development Bank (AsDB)
- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)
- Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

Sub-regional banks

- Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA)
- Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)
- Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB)
- Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI)
- Development Bank of the Central African States (BDEAC)
- Development Bank of Latin America (CAF)
- East African Development Bank (EADB)
- Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (TDB)¹
- Economic Cooperation Organization Trade and Development Bank (ETDB)
- ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID)
- Eurasian Development Bank (EDB)

ANNEX 2

Tools used for Partnerships

Tool 1: A Partnership Vision Statement Template

Tool 2: Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis Template

Tool 3: Organizational Context Tool

Tool 4: Partnership Assessment Table

Tool 5: Champion Mapping Analysis Template

Tool 6: The Relationship/Partnership Spectrum

Tool 7: The Partnership Agreement Checklist

Tool 8: The Partnership Analysis Tool

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ABOUT PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organization that advances children's rights and equality for girls.

We believe in the power and potential of every child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. Working together with children, young people, our supporters and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children.

We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood. And we enable children to prepare for – and respond to – crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge.

We have been building powerful partnerships for children for over 80 years, and are now active in more than 71 countries.

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