



Article

# Mapping and Analysis of Sustainability-Oriented Partnerships in Non-Profit Organizations: The Case of Saudi Arabia

Hazem S. Kassem <sup>1,2,\*</sup> , Mohammed Aljuaid <sup>3</sup>, Bader Alhafi Alotaibi <sup>1</sup>  and Rabab Ghozy <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Society, King Saud University, Riyadh 11451, Saudi Arabia; balhafi@ksu.edu.sa

<sup>2</sup> Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Society, Mansoura University, Mansoura 35516, Egypt; drrabab@mans.edu.eg

<sup>3</sup> Department of Health Administration, King Saud University, Riyadh 11451, Saudi Arabia; maljuaid@ksu.edu.sa

\* Correspondence: hskassem@ksu.edu.sa; Tel.: +966-581-045-671

Received: 15 July 2020; Accepted: 1 September 2020; Published: 2 September 2020



**Abstract:** The growing alignment between Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) and cooperation development actors has contributed to creating new partnerships to be harnessed in addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (e.g., SDG 17). This study aimed to map the key characteristics of engagements between NPOs and other actors. An analytical framework was designed to map the partnerships in terms of four main areas, namely, drivers, motivations, the partnership's characteristics, and outcomes. Charitable associations were selected as a representative type of NPO. The study analyzed 459 partnerships established by charities in the Riyadh region during 2016–2018. The findings showed that the associations engaged in partnerships mainly to enhance their financial stability. Cross-sector partnerships were observed in 63.4% of the cases, principally with the private sector. The results also indicated that 89.7% of the partnerships could be called “transactional partnerships” in cases of both philanthropic and social investment partnerships. It could be concluded that the mapping framework provides useful information for policy-makers concerned with how charitable associations engaged with the other actors, as well as the existing policy gaps to be implemented for sustainability.

**Keywords:** non-profit organizations; charitable associations; partnerships; mapping; Saudi Arabia

## 1. Introduction

The concept of Sustainable Development gained enormous attention worldwide after the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 [1]. There are 17 SDGs, which address the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainability issues [2]. Because of the scale and complexity of these issues, the global sustainable development agenda—as formulated in SDGs—emphasizes that the first 16 goals need to be covered by diverse cross-sector partners to explore innovative solutions that effectively address these problems [3]. In other words, SDG 17, ‘Partnerships for the Goals’, underlines the importance of interactions between actors to foster sustainable development [4]. The 2030 Agenda refers to two main types of partnerships for implementing the SDGs. First, there is the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, to be led by governments, which aims to bring together the public sector, the private sector, civil society, the UN system, and other actors to facilitate an intensive global engagement around implementation and mobilizing all available resources [5]. Second, multi-stakeholder partnerships are a complement to the Global Partnership. Multi-stakeholder partnerships “involve organisations from different societal sectors working together,

sharing risks and combining their unique resources and competencies in ways that can generate and maximize value towards shared partnership and individual partner objectives, often through more innovative, more sustainable, more efficient and/ or more systemic approaches” [6] (p. 1). The aim of these partnerships is to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources to support the implementation of the SDGs [7].

The United Nations and other international organizations have acknowledged the contribution of Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) in achieving the SDGs, through specific social, institutional, and technological innovations and practices [8]. NPOs consist of commercial and noncommercial organizations whose end goals are to improve a community’s wellbeing by providing goods and services rather than maximizing the profits they make [9]. The core ideology of most NPOs is economic philanthropy—to improve democratic citizenship, social cohesion, and fair trade and to establish a better economy for all [10]. Nowadays, NPOs play a vital role at both the national and international level in addressing social, economic, and environmental problems, and these organizations also facilitate integration of sustainable development concerns into the decision-making process within both the public and private sectors [11]. To tackle such problems, NPOs have deployed different strategies by relying on multiple resource providers to pursue other activities furthering the common good and to enable genuine progress in a community [3,10].

Since the 1980s, NPOs have undergone remarkable changes in promoting the adoption of business-like approaches [12]. In this context, Dart [13] made a first step toward developing the area of NPOs becoming more business-like. He proposes that NPOs can become business-like in any dimension of the following: business-like organization of NPOs’ core, business-like goals, and business-like rhetoric. The first dimension focuses on the concept of business-like at the core, with support processes in NPOs reflecting the belief that organizations can and should be built on corporate management knowledge and practice [14]. A number of different concepts highlight particular aspects of business-like organizations. Firstly, corporatization refers to changes in the NPO’s governance structure [15,16]. Secondly, marketization focuses on NPOs’ market-type relationships with stakeholders or market-type relationships gradually penetrating a country’s welfare system from a macro perspective [17,18]. Thirdly, social enterprises focus on undertaking the commercial activities and entrepreneurial behaviors of NPOs that involve high degrees of pro-activeness, risk-taking, and innovation [19,20]. Fourthly, the concept of professionalization is also used to describe business-like organizations. This term is generally describing the selection method of personnel [21]. In other words, more staff with a business management background may be antithetical to business-like practices [22]. Finally, philanthropy can also be organized in more business-like ways. Venture philanthropy applies venture capitalist methods to philanthropic funding, not just by investing money but also by providing business expertise [23]. In return, NPOs have high expectations regarding results and accountability [24]. The second dimension deals with NPOs adopting business-like goals. This most directly refers to the concepts of conversion and commercialization. The term conversion refers to changing of legal status from non-profit to for-profit and shifting control of assets or responsibility for liabilities [25], whereas commercialization captures NPOs’ increasing reliance on revenue from sales of goods and services [18]. The third dimension encompasses a set of key concepts that deal with business-like rhetoric, emphasizing some theoretical ideas such as communication, organizational identity, and value frames [26–29].

Collaboration in partnerships is one of the effective strategies in motivating businesses to source sustainably so as to improve the community’s social or environmental conditions [30,31]. Partnerships have become one of the main issues within business–society relations to achieve sustainability governance [32,33]. Therefore, research on sustainability-oriented partnerships has received a considerable amount of attention since the 1990s, both in the social [34,35] and the environmental sustainability domains [36–39]. Partnerships between private, public, and NPOs are defined in multiple ways. Nevidjon [40] defines partnerships as “pooling of joint resources (financial, natural, and human), knowledge, skills to create added value”. However, a more holistic definition of partnerships is “collaborative arrangements of joint resources and competencies in which two or

more actors are involved in a non-hierarchical process through which these actors pursue common goals" [41]. According to Ferraro et al. [42] and George et al. [43], partnerships have emerged as a new paradigm for strategy across the different sectors to solve complex sustainability challenges through collaboration. The five clusters of partnership characteristics are as follows: producing outcomes that contribute to the creation of public value; sharing resources, practical knowledge, and cultural values between partners; enhanced access to funding; attainment of common goals for mutual benefits; contractual, structured binding agreements; organizational mission fulfillment [40,44]. Understanding such characteristics in practice requires analyzing the framework of the partnership in terms of (1) form and focus, (2) nature and types of partnerships involved, (3) organizing and acting, (4) governance structure, and (5) sustaining outcomes [45].

In Saudi Arabia, NPOs were represented in four kinds of leading organizations: charities, cooperatives, foundations, and endowments [46]. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Development [47], the number of NPOs rose by 131% from 2011 (1125) to 2018 (2598), including their revenues (7.8%), expenses (8.3%), and assets (10.2%). Despite the increased number of NPOs, their performance has been inadequate, and they tend to be weak and governed by traditional management practices. This weakness results in the following: a less than 1% share of GDP; a lower rate of outreach (1:43,000); a decline of volunteer involvement in their activities; a limited scale of professionalism and effectiveness; focusing on "charity" instead of social development; and a lower rate of employment contribution [48]. According to Altuwaijri [49], the majority of NPOs had been faced with different challenges, including an aligning mission, methods, and resources; earning public trust and creating awareness of the significance of NPOs; balancing individual interest and the common good; moving beyond charity to systemic change; lack of funding; networking with the private sector; institutionalizing the internal functions and structures. From 2010 to 2018, NPOs have adopted a large number of partnerships with other sectors to promote economic growth, developing their internal capabilities, capitalizing on new opportunities or addressing complex problems, and fostering local ownership for sustainability [50].

Despite several studies examining different areas of partnerships between NPOs and other actors, most research has focused on the company's perspective and university–business partnerships. Limited research has attempted to map and analyze the nature and impact of the partnerships implemented and the various roles in collaborative settings, in particular, within a Saudi context. In the present paper, we aim to provide a holistic understanding of this topic to try to cover this gap by mapping and analyzing the partnerships implemented between charitable associations and other sectors. The results gained from this study will support the fourth theme of the Saudi National Transformation Program 2020 as part of its Vision 2030 (Social Empowerment and Non-Profit Sector Development) and its strategic objectives: support NPOs growth, enable NPOs to achieve a more profound impact, and empower social development work [51]. Furthermore, this study makes a unique contribution to the literature by presenting the internal and external factors that create conditions for collaboration, clarifying how public and private actors seek to engage with NPOs for sustainability, results gained, and where policy gaps remain.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

### 2.1. Drivers of Partnerships

Drivers are external factors that create the conditions for the partnership to occur [52]. They are part of the broader context that promotes the formation of a partnership [53]. Partnerships are essential to accelerating progress in the SDGs [54]. Generally, there are two main reasons partnerships are critical for sustainable development. First, the complex character of sustainability problems demands the active involvement of all partners to resolve them. Second, sustainable development stresses the need for mutual attainment of environmental health, social equity, and economic wealth, for which the responsibilities and resources are allocated to different partners [55]. The literature has identified a

variety of sociopolitical factors that affect sustainability-oriented partnerships, including individual, ecological, and organizational contexts [56]. In this sense, meeting the expectations of the stakeholders and the urgent need to raise the societal perception of corporate responsibilities are among the drivers that contribute to the formation of partnerships for sustainability [57]. Furthermore, the rise of information communication technologies (ICTs) also encourages actors to engage in partnerships [58]. ICTs facilitate cooperative relationships to address stakeholder needs, share information, and mobilize their demands beyond their traditional interactions [52]. Additionally, ICTs play a crucial role in the transformation of organizations in today's highly international business environment [59]. In the same vein, increasing pressure to compete in global markets has led the private sector to work with NPOs. This engagement creates business partnerships with lower costs and fewer regulations, particularly in developing countries [60]. Another critical driver of collaborative engagements is the regulatory environment [61]. As noted by Kapelus [62], the absence of environmental regulations drives partnership formation to influence or avert pending or imminent regulations. However, private entities are now taking a role in meeting forms of regulation, including management standards, certification schemes, codes of conduct, and eco-labels, by creating partnerships with NPOs and other organizations [52,63]. Unsurprisingly, the almost universal decline in governmental efficacy is another essential contextual driver of partnership [64]. Governments' failure to meet sustainable development challenges drives NPOs to gain the opportunity to replace the government and engage with other actors collaboratively [65].

## 2.2. Motivations

Motivations are the specific conditions that stimulated the partners collectively to address an issue or set of issues [53]. According to Gray and Stites [52], there are four types of motivation for forming partnerships: competence-oriented, resource-oriented, legitimacy-oriented, and society-oriented motivations. By "competencies", we refer to the knowledge and skills shared during collective action between partners [66]. These acquired competencies are an essential motivator because of the differences in knowledge, skills, and capabilities between partners [67]. For businesses and other organizations, motivators such as gaining expertise, leveraging unmatched knowledge, identifying issues and trends, and growing awareness of complex social problems are incentives for partnerships [68,69], whereas acquiring complementary capabilities, such as technical and managerial skills, is very important for NPOs [70]. In terms of resource-oriented motivations, the term "resources" refers to an organization's assets, including social and financial capital [67]. Leveraging resources such as gaining access to networks and to business and political leaders; capacity building; creating innovative products and markets; securing monetary funds; and gaining goods, services, and volunteers motivate NPOs and other sectors to collaborate [71,72]. Both partners can benefit from these complementary resources to reduce the costs and share the risks of garnering these resources separately [52].

Regarding legitimacy, partners need to meet societal norms and expectations for obtaining social acceptance [67]. Without legitimacy, partners will have difficulty in acquiring the resources needed for partnership sustainability [73]. For NPOs, legitimacy is critical for different motivations, including building a reputation, image, and branding; maximizing sphere of impact; garnering broader support; becoming a more prominent actor; and responding to demands for accountability [74–76]. On the other hand, reasons such as saving face, building the social license to operate, avoiding confrontation, and attracting and retaining employees are the most frequent justifications offered by businesses and other organizations for partnership [67,77,78]. Finally, partners may also have broader society-oriented motivations for collaboration. In this context, Kolk et al. [66] and Byiers et al. [78] argued that the importance of partnerships for society represent the following motivations: risk sharing, influencing policy development, responding to stakeholder problems, building public awareness of issues, and influencing social and environmental change. These motivations promote the needed changes to raise society's capacity to deal with sustainability issues [52].

### 2.3. Characteristics of Partnerships

The relationship between the partners should be properly managed in order to understand the set of continuous interactions that take place within the collaboration [79]. In short, it is about knowing those elements that characterize the relationship between the partners, this being essential to analyze such relationship attributes as the commitment, the trust, or the mutual exchange of information [80]. Therefore, finding the right partner is a critical determinant for partnership sustainability [81]. This step is essential to combine complementary skills and resources successfully to achieve the partners' objectives [82]. Partner-selection criteria varied according to the types of partners that were best suited to implement a partnership, the objectives of a partnership, partnership type, and nature of activities [78]. However, Menden et al. [82] argued that finding a suitable partner is not an easy process for both partners because of ideological differences. Therefore, many NPOs and private companies struggle to identify the right counterpart and build trust-based collaboration [52].

There is a wide diversity of partnership types between NPOs and other organizations [83]. These are classified in the present study into three dimensions to enable discussion: number and types of organizations engaged in a partnership, institutional agreement, and degree of business versus social orientation. Partnership forms include intra-sector and cross-sector partnerships [78]. Intra-sector partnerships represent the collaboration between organizations within the same sector [84], while cross-sector partnerships refer to collaborations between organizations that operate in different sectors—in other words, universities, governments, businesses, and civil society [85].

Regarding institutional agreement, partnerships can be classified into three types: informal partnerships, partnerships involving minimal work between two organizations, and formal contractual arrangements with the exchange of funds [78,86]. However, the legal form of a partnership is the only form of governance structure to provide direction, manage the evolution of the partnership, and resolve internal conflicts [87]. In this regard, Afansa et al. [88] listed four formal arrangements between parties, including Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), written agreements between parties to clearly establish expectations, goals, and roles and responsibilities; Letters of Association, written documents defining the terms of a partnership; Terms of Reference (TOR); and contracts, agreements by two or more parties, usually enforceable by law.

The continuum of partnership according to the size of investments and degree of business versus social orientation includes two types: transactional partnerships and strategic partnerships [67,76,89]. In transactional partnerships, organizations only donate funds to NPOs but do not engage further [78,90]. Weihe [90] identified two forms of such partnerships: (1) philanthropic partnerships that involve the one-way transfer of donated financial assets, services, products, workforce, or other resources from a partner to other partners; and (2) partnerships of reciprocal exchange (social investments) that involve more organizational resources and can be used more strategically by engaging in mutual or reciprocal marketing and campaigning activities. In strategic partnerships, partners combine complementary strengths to generate a more significant developmental effect [91]. Tennyson et al. [81] distinguish two forms of strategic partnership: (1) partnerships of independent value creation (new commercial initiatives), in which all partners collectively attempt to match each of their individual goals—the partnership creates value for both partners but in different ways—and (2) integrative partnerships (core-business partnerships), in which all partners work together strategically to develop a new service or address a common problem in which they all achieve a mutual benefit.

### 2.4. Outcomes of Partnerships

The term “outcomes” refers to changes or effects resulting from the partnership [84]. Measuring partnership outcomes is an essential step in the successful management of a partnership for different reasons, including monitoring resources, concluding lessons learned, and supporting the public accountability of a partnership [52,78,92]. A key outcome of a partnership for NPOs is the acquisition of resources (including goods, services, volunteers, technical and managerial expertise, and investments) to achieve organizational goals [52]. Other outcomes may include the development



of human capital, environmental protection, organizational innovation, access to decision-makers, better access to information, more effective services, and attention to sustainability [52,53,66,93]. Austin and Seitanidi [94] noted that partnership outcomes significantly differ according to each level of analysis. At the meso level (organizational NPO), associational value is considered as highly important in terms of credibility and visibility, increased public awareness, and increase in support for organizational mission. At the micro level (individuals), the most important outcomes are represented in instrumental value such as new managerial skills and associational value in terms of brand reputation, legitimacy, increased stakeholder loyalty, and stakeholder communication. At the macro level (society), some issues, intended and unintended, have high priority such as improved well-being, improved social inclusion, awareness and disease prevention, and increased life expectancy. Despite the multiplicity of potential benefits for partnering between organizations, the most significant risk for NPOs, as noted by Sterne et al. [53], is a tarnished reputation should these organizations align with other partners who fail to meet the level of commitment needed to achieve the desired social and environmental impact.

For the present study, as shown in Figure 1, four components were descriptively tested to illustrate the current situation of sustainability-oriented partnerships in the study area. These components are extrinsic drivers, intrinsic motivations, characteristics of the partnerships, and outcomes of the partnerships.

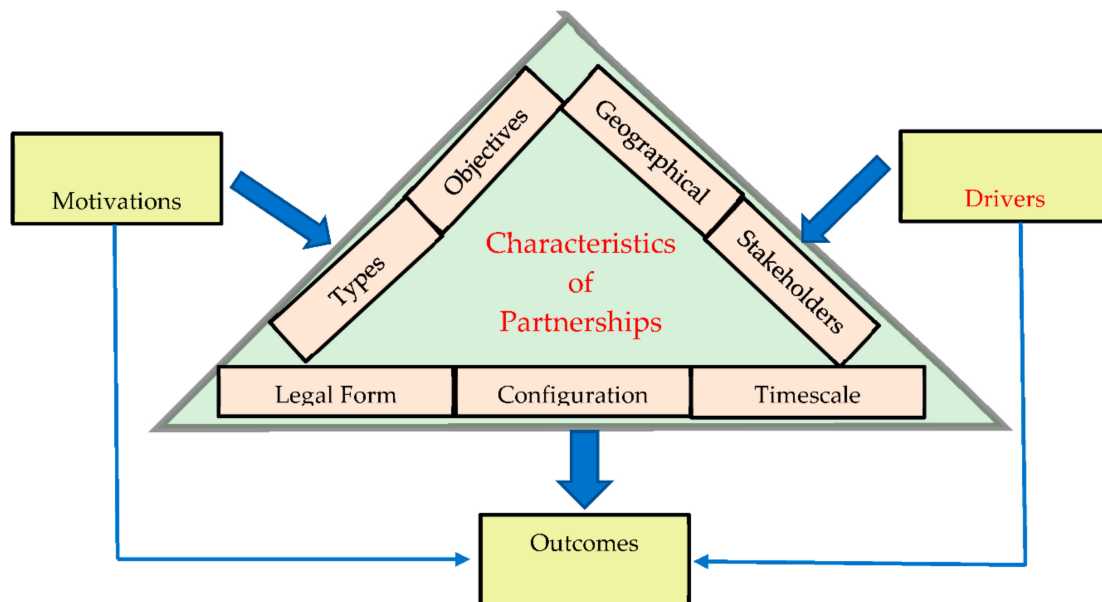


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Study Area

The present study was carried out in the Riyadh region, located in the center of Saudi Arabia. It is the second-largest Saudi region, with an area of 404,420 km<sup>2</sup>. It also ranked second in terms of population, with 8,216,284 inhabitants. Administratively, the region is divided into 19 governorates [95].

#### 3.2. Survey Design

A qualitative survey was designed to map the partnerships established between NPOs and other actors. According to Jansen [96], a qualitative survey is a systematic method for determining the diversity of a specific phenomenon within a given population. In the context of this study, the phenomenon is the way in which different actors engage with NPOs. The unit analysis in this survey is a partnership. The present study highlights how the partnerships established differ across NPOs in terms of

numbers, types of actors engaged, and characteristics of the partnerships. To conduct this study, we selected charitable associations as representative organizations for NPOs. Furthermore, the selection of partnerships was identified by two criteria: whether the partnerships were signed during 2016–2018 and the formality of the partnerships.

### 3.3. Sample

Given the focus of the present study on partnerships, the population of the present study included all charities that are working in the study area. We focused only on organizations that have a common interest or activity (charitable association), while organizations established by donations of funds for future causes and that give grants to other organizations (foundation) were not included in the population. For this purpose, the database of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development was used [27]. All charities working in the different domains of sustainable social development were selected. This resulted in a total of 192 associations. Each association was approached to collect data on its engagement in partnerships with the other actors. It was observed that some associations did not engage in formal partnerships during the period identified. Thus, in mapping the partnerships, we were guided by a set of criteria: (a) whether at least one partnership was signed by the association, (b) whether official documents of a partnership were provided, and (c) whether the partnership cooperated with the study's team and answered questions accurately. On this basis, we selected a random sample of 81 associations. The number of partnerships signed during 2016–2018 is illustrated in Table 1. In total, 459 partnerships were included in the sample, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Number of the partnerships signed between charitable associations and other actors during 2016–2018.

Year	Number *	%
2016	105	22.9
2017	136	29.6
2018	218	47.5
Total	459	

\* This number included the partnerships that signed before 2016 and were still established during the investigation period.

### 3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

According to the conceptual framework of this study, four main dimensions were analyzed in each partnership: drivers, motivations, characteristics, and outcomes. The data were collected and organized through a framework analysis approach (Table 2). Framework analysis is often used in policy research when issues have been identified a priori and/or the sample is predesigned [97]. This framework shows how the specific and main questions relate to each other and to the four main dimensions. This study used the content analysis method for analysis of the official documents of the partnership, partnership agreements and annexes, and the association's website to obtain the needed information according to the analytical framework. In case of missing data, we arranged telephone calls with some employees of the associations. The research was conducted between September and December 2019. The information was then indexed, tabulated, and charted by using frequencies and percentages.

**Table 2.** Framework for examining actors' engagement with the charitable associations.

Dimensions	Data Options			
1. Extrinsic drivers *	Copied from official documents and/or actors' website			
2. Intrinsic motivations *	Copied from official documents and/or actors' website			
3. Characteristics of a partnership				
3.1 Configuration				
3.1.1 Partner-selection criteria *	Alignment with the partner's mission and strategy			
	Partner's commitment (dedicated to performing tasks)			
	Partner's financial stability or size of financial resources acquired			
	Partner's competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities)			
	Contributed complementary resources			
	Personal relations			
	Previous experience with the partner			
	Quality of services offered (added value for stakeholders)			
	Partner's reputation			
	Legal structure (roles, responsibilities, and legal form)			
Organizational structure (governance model)				
Strategic value for the future				
3.1.2 Nationality of partners *	Domestic	National	International	All
3.1.3 Actor type *	University	Private sector	Banks	Foundations
	Endowments	Government	UN organizations	Other
3.1.4 Institutional form	Intra-sector		Cross-sector	
3.1.5 Legal form	Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)	Letter of Association	Terms of Reference (TOR)	Contract
3.1.6 Timescale	Number of months		Undetermined	
3.1.7 Geographical coverage	District	City	Governorate	Region
	National	International		
3.2 Stakeholders *	Copied from official documents and/or actors' website			
3.3 Objectives *	Copied from official documents and/or actors' website			
3.4 Types	Philanthropic		Social investments	
	New commercial initiatives		Core-business	
4. Outcomes				
4.1 Benefits *	Copied from official documents and/or actors' website			
4.2 Evaluation				
4.2.1 Implementation	Yes		No	
4.2.2 Evaluative party	Association	Partner	Third-party	
4.2.3 Methodology	Copied from official documents and/or actors' website			
4.3 Maintenance of a partnership	Completed and renewed annually		Completed and all objectives accomplished	
	Completed and objectives partially accomplished		Completed and objectives not accomplished	
	Termination of contract			

\* Each partnership could be included in more than one item.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Extrinsic Drivers

The results of the sociopolitical factors that influence collaborations between the partners are presented in Figure 2. The results show that the most crucial external factor that explains why associations decided to engage in partnerships was that growth opportunities for collaboration were provided by Saudi Vision 2030 (76.5%). This finding reflects the government's encouragement of cross-sector partnerships to overcome the challenges facing the Saudi sustainable development plan for 2030. The results also revealed that increasing awareness of the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was another important driver, mentioned in 60.6% of the partnerships established. This result shows the strong belief among companies that partnerships with associations would be an opportunity to create value-added and a positive image about their role in society's problem-solving. The higher need for social innovation was another driver for partnerships, at 50.8%. This need is



understandable because one partner is not able to solve complex issues alone. Hence, the partnerships offer a greater opportunity to suggest and implement innovative solutions for intervention.

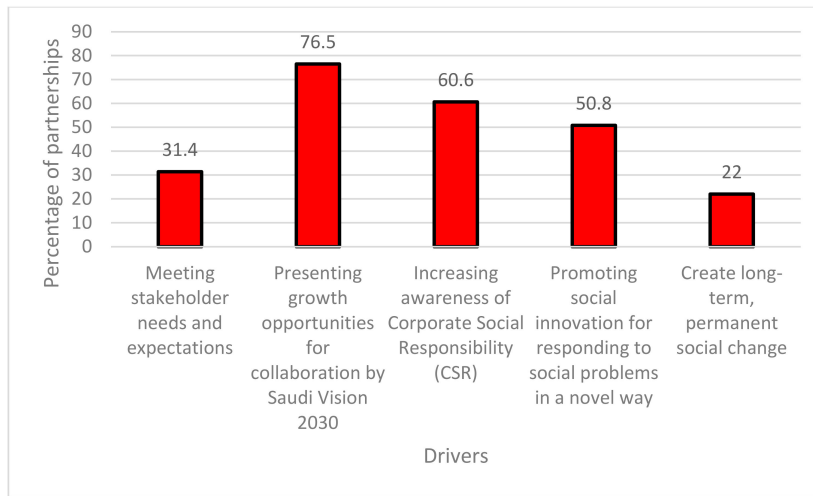


Figure 2. Extrinsic drivers of the partnerships.

4.2. Intrinsic Motivations

The distribution of the partnerships according to the reasons that motivate the associations to partner is presented in Figure 3, where it can be observed that the associations mentioned various reasons for each partnership. The findings showed that enhancing financial stability was the most important motive in the vast majority of the partnerships (84.7%). This result indicates that financial need is considered by the associations surveyed as their overarching motivation. The results also highlighted the importance of leveraging resources as one of the main motivations in more than two-thirds of the partnerships analyzed (66.9%). This finding reflects the fact that associations used partnerships to better achieve their mission through maximizing the use of resources from other partners. Furthermore, enhancing access to knowledge and expertise ranked third at 62.7%. This result supports the previous results, in which financial and non-financial resources are among the most important motivations for a partnership’s engagement.

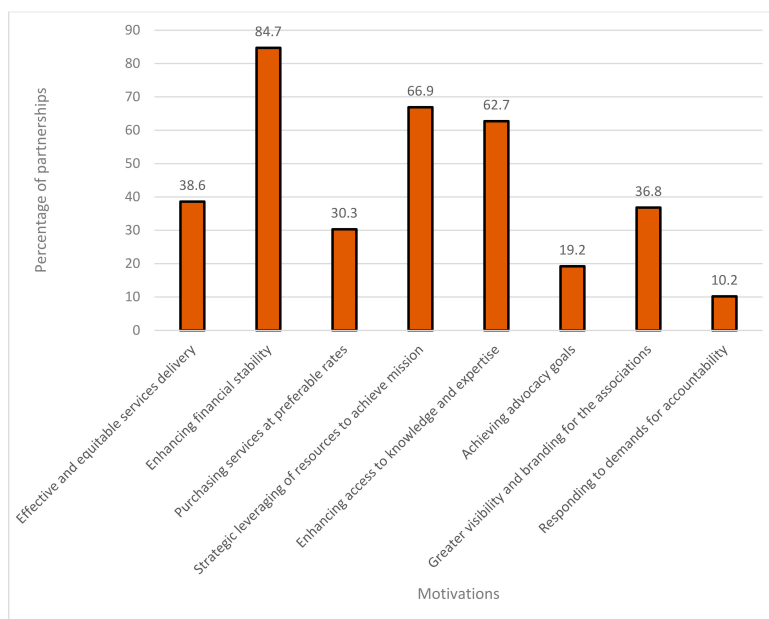


Figure 3. Intrinsic motivations of the partnerships.

### 4.3. Characteristics of the Partnerships

#### 4.3.1. Configuration

The partner-selection criteria are presented in Table 3. The results reported that a partner's financial stability was the most frequent selection criterion in more than half of the partnerships analyzed (58.4%). This supports the earlier findings obtained in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 and confirms that associations considered financial resources as an important issue for achieving their mission. Approximately 50% of the partnerships studied also indicated that a partner's commitment was another reason for selecting partners. This result shows that partners' dedication to performing tasks as planned in the partnerships has greater influence on the partner-selection process from the associations' perspective. However, one noteworthy finding was that selecting a partner is based on personal relations, as observed in 45.9% of the partnerships investigated. This finding shows that selecting or attracting partners for collaboration with charities is not an easy process. Thus, the headquarters-based members of associations use their relations with the private sector and other actors to illustrate the strategic programs of the associations to meet the real needs of their stakeholders.

**Table 3.** The partner-selection criteria applied by the associations.

Criteria (n = 459)	Frequency	Percentage
Alignment with the association's mission and strategy	146	31.8
Partner's commitment	231	50.3
Partner's financial stability or amount of financial resources acquired	268	58.4
Partner's competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities)	85	18.5
Contributed complementary resources	31	6.8
Personal relations	211	45.9
Previous experience with the partner	133	29.0
Quality of services offered (added value for stakeholders)	192	41.8
Partner's reputation	189	41.2
Legal structure (roles, responsibilities, and legal form)	177	38.6
Organizational structure (governance model)	63	13.7
Strategic value for the future	56	12.2

As part of the analytical framework, partnerships were examined to identify areas of institutional form as shown in Table 4. The results indicated that collaboration between organizations within the same sector is observed in 36.6% of the total partnerships analyzed, while the remaining partnerships (63.4%) are characterized as cross-sector partnerships. The results showed that the nationality of the partners varied across partnerships, including domestic, national, and international partners at 71%, 57.3%, and 4.8%, respectively. Moreover, the multiplicity and diversity of actors engaged in the partnerships are also observed in our analysis. However, among the associations surveyed, the private sector and foundations were involved in the majority of corporations.

Our analysis of the formal arrangements between partners showed that MoUs were the most popular form in the majority of partnerships analyzed (Table 5). This result reflects the fact that partners, in particular, private sector partners, often choose to use an MoU because it is a friendlier, bipartisan expression of a working relationship than a formal contract. Obviously, the findings indicate that the partners do not prefer to imply a legally enforceable agreement. The results also indicated that the second legal form applied was a letter of association, as seen in 22.2% of the partnerships. Furthermore, TOR and contracts were regarded as the least important forms considered in the legal arrangements between the associations surveyed and other actors.

**Table 4.** Type and nationality of actors engaged in the partnerships.

Number (n = 459)	Number	Percentage
	Institutional form	
Intra-sector	168	36.6
Cross-sector	291	63.4
	Nationality of partners *	
Domestic	326	71.0
National	263	57.3
International	22	4.8
	Actor type *	
University	48	10.5
Private sector	309	67.3
Banks	8	1.7
Foundations	205	44.7
Endowments	28	6.1
Government	19	4.1
UN organizations	6	1.3
Other	27	5.9

\* Some partnerships included more than one actor.

**Table 5.** Distribution of the partnerships according to their legal form.

Variable (n = 459)	Number	Percentage
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	338	73.6
Letter of Association	102	22.2
Terms of Reference (TOR)	6	1.3
Contract	13	2.8

In terms of the timescale of the partnerships, as shown in Table 6, the findings indicated that the duration of the cooperation varied across the partnerships investigated. It was observed that among the timescales, one year was the most popular choice for the duration of the partnerships. Fewer than half of the partnerships (44.2%) had continued for one year. The next most popular period for the partnerships was less than one year. This duration was observed in 17.9% of the partnerships. Besides that, the timescales of one-and-a-half years and two years were also observed in 13.1% and 8.1% of the partnerships studied, respectively.

**Table 6.** Distribution of the partnerships according to their timescales.

Variable (n = 459) *	Number	Percentage
<One year	82	17.9
One year	203	44.2
One-and-a-half years	60	13.1
Two years	37	8.1

\* Because of the extension of some partnerships to a certain period, the duration of a partnership presented in this table is only calculated as mentioned in the partnership's annex at the beginning of the collaboration.

As part of the partnership configuration analysis, partnerships were examined to identify their geographical coverage, as shown in Table 7. Approximately 40% of the partnerships cover a geographically localized community within a larger city or town. This may be attributed to the fact that the multiplicity of associations in the city and the limited financial resources make each association focus on a specific area with the target people to show the added value of the partnership. Furthermore, almost one-quarter of the partnerships cover various areas within a city. On the other

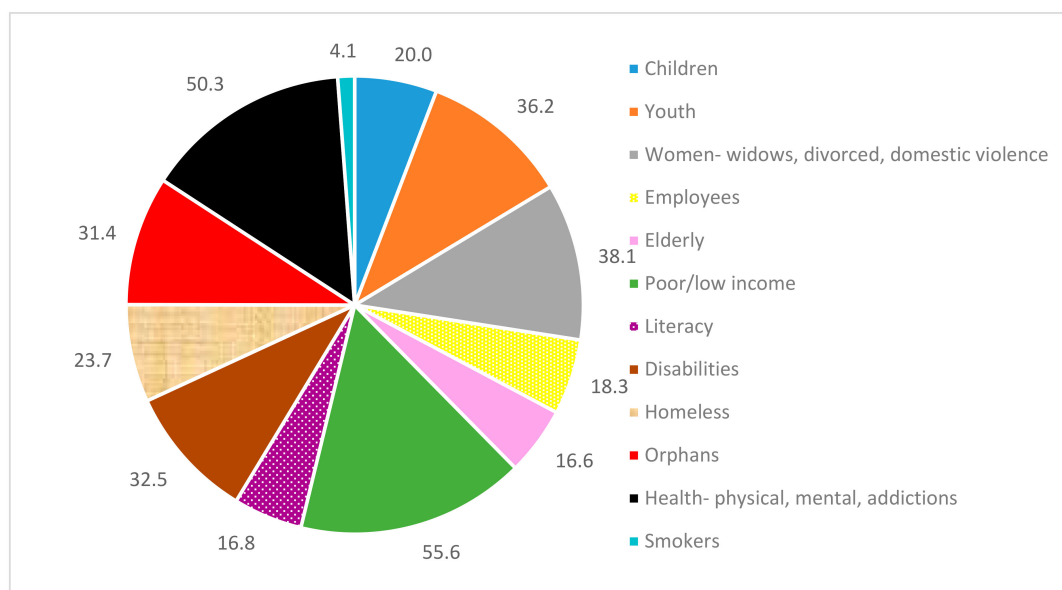
hand, the percentage of partnerships that included activities conducted at the national level reached only 8.7% of the total partnerships implemented.

**Table 7.** Distribution of the partnerships according to their geographical coverage.

Variable (n = 459)	Number	Percentage
A neighborhood or city block	184	40.1
City	115	25.1
Governorate	99	21.6
Region	21	4.6
National	40	8.7

#### 4.3.2. Stakeholders

The distribution of the partnerships, according to their stakeholders, is presented in Figure 4, where it can be concluded that some partnerships involved various targets. The results showed that the most frequent beneficiaries were poor or low-income people and people with health problems—physical, mental, and addiction-related. These categories were observed in more than half of the corporations, at 55.6% and 50.3%, respectively. Moreover, the cases of women—widows, divorcees, and victims of domestic violence—were addressed in 38.1% of the partnerships. In addition, the youth were also targeted by more than one-third (36.2%) of the corporations. Finally, other stakeholders targeted by the partnerships included those with disabilities, orphans, homeless persons, children, employees of the associations, those with poor literacy, the elderly, and smokers.



**Figure 4.** Stakeholders of the partnerships.

#### 4.3.3. Objectives

Figure 5 shows the purpose of the partnerships between charities and other actors. Among the three most frequent objectives for corporations, direct funding and indirect funding ranked first and third at 43.1% and 29%, respectively, whereas the need of sponsors for various events ranked second at around 32% of the partnerships investigated. It was also observed that cultural and regional services, entrepreneurship, and capacity building and training were among the issues that attracted actors to engage in associations with the corporations.

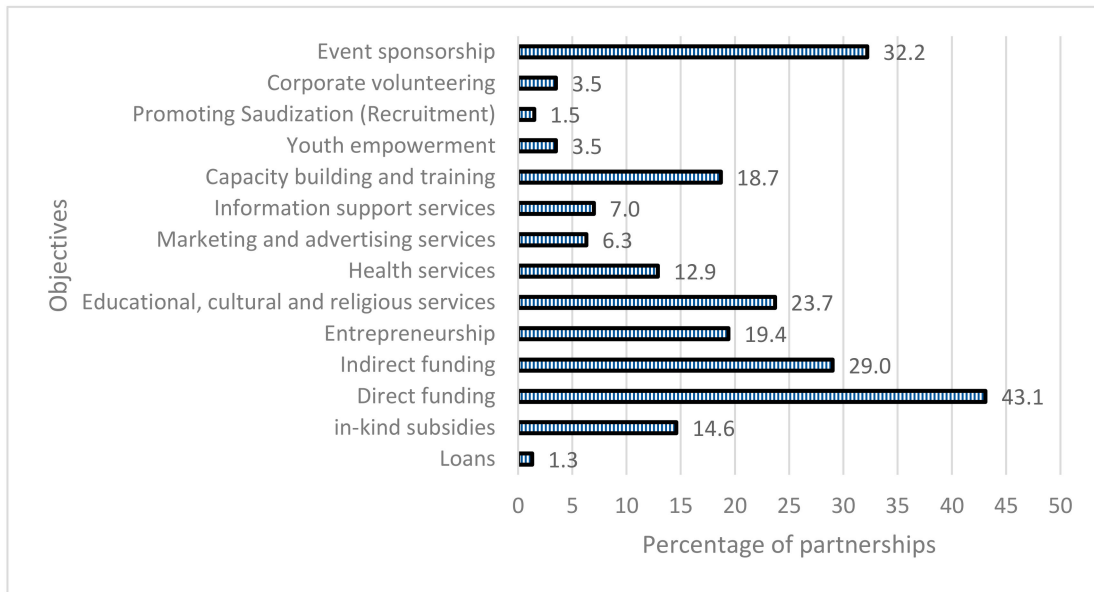


Figure 5. Objectives of the partnerships.

4.3.4. Types

The results that described the types of partnerships in terms of the degree of business versus social orientation are illustrated in Figure 6. The findings reported that the overwhelming majority of the partnerships (89.7%) could be called transactional partnerships in the cases of both philanthropic and social investment partnerships. As philanthropy was the most common type between actors, this reflects the fact that partnerships are motivated by the need for financial resources (grants or gifts-in-kind) and the improvement of the partner’s image by doing something socially beneficial. On the other hand, strategic partnerships that were believed to create mutual benefit for the strategic activities of both parties were only occasionally observed in corporations. These corporations involved the category of new commercial initiatives (7.2%) and core-business activities (3.1%).



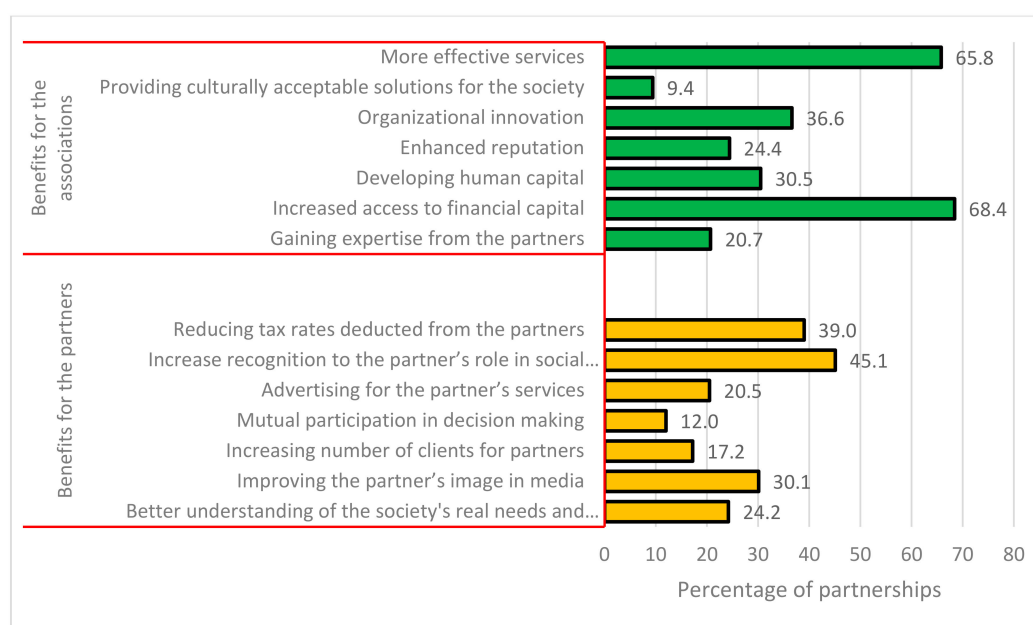
Figure 6. Types of partnerships.



#### 4.4. Outcomes

##### 4.4.1. Benefits

Figure 7 gives an overview of what both the associations and the partners gained. The results indicated that increased access to financial capital was the most frequent benefit from the associations' point of view. Furthermore, providing effective services was observed as an important benefit in fewer than two-thirds of the partnerships (65.8%) examined. On the partners' side, it was observed that increased recognition of their role in social responsibility was the most beneficial in 45.1% of the corporations. One of the interesting results in terms of benefits gained by the partners was reduced tax rates, seen in 39% of the partnerships.



**Figure 7.** Benefits for both associations and partners (The benefits for the partners were determined from the associations' perspective in light of content analysis and telephone calls with the associations' employees).

##### 4.4.2. Evaluation

As part of measuring the outcomes, the mapping framework showed that only 20.3% of the partnerships analyzed were assessed (Figure 8) using the evaluation tools and frameworks identified in Figure 9. Of these, 50.5% of the partnerships were evaluated by the partners, whereas 38.7% of them were assessed by a third party (Figure 10). The findings indicated that the evaluation methodologies varied across the partnerships, as shown in Figure 9. Out of seven methodologies used for evaluation, the most frequently used tool was the stakeholder satisfaction survey. This tool included closed quantitative questions and open-ended questions for determining the partnership's performance from the stakeholder's perspective [98]. In the same vein, the partnership self-assessment tool was used in the case of 24.7% of the partnerships. This methodology focuses on different aspects of the partnership. It was used by the members of a partnership who voluntarily participated in self-evaluation to express their perceptions and opinions about partnership experiences. It was designed to be used by members of a partnership [99]. Additionally, the tool of the logic model is also observed as an important methodology for the evaluation of the partnerships, at 19.4%. A logic model is a useful tool to describe the main elements of the partnership, including inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes (short-term, intermediate, and long-term). This tool can be used to guide the development of evaluation questions and demonstrate a link between the efforts of members of a partnership, a partnership's goals, and priorities of the stakeholders' needs [100]. The other methodologies, including Partnership

Effectiveness Continuum, Social Return on Investment (SROI), Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA), and Social Network Analysis, were also used for evaluation of the partnerships.

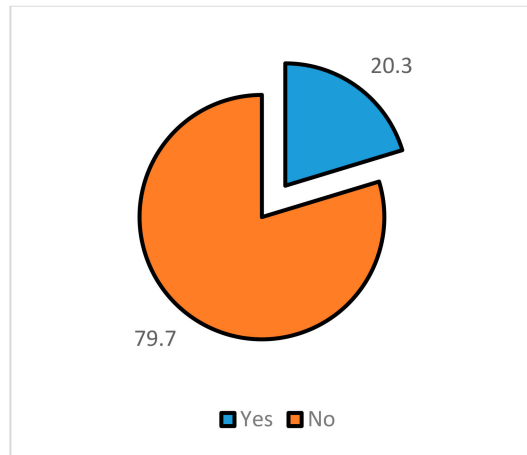


Figure 8. Use of a methodology for evaluating the partnerships.

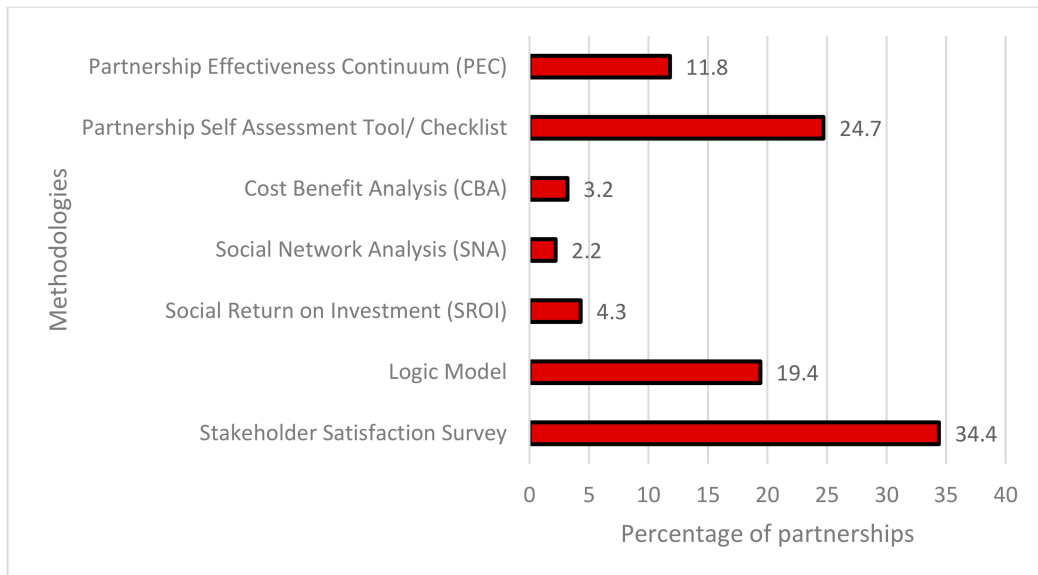


Figure 9. Types of methodologies used for the partnership evaluation.

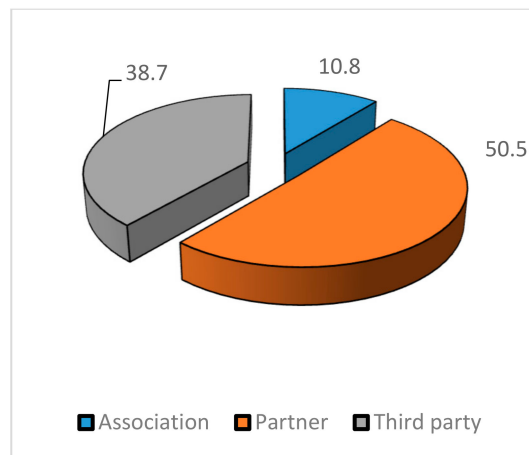
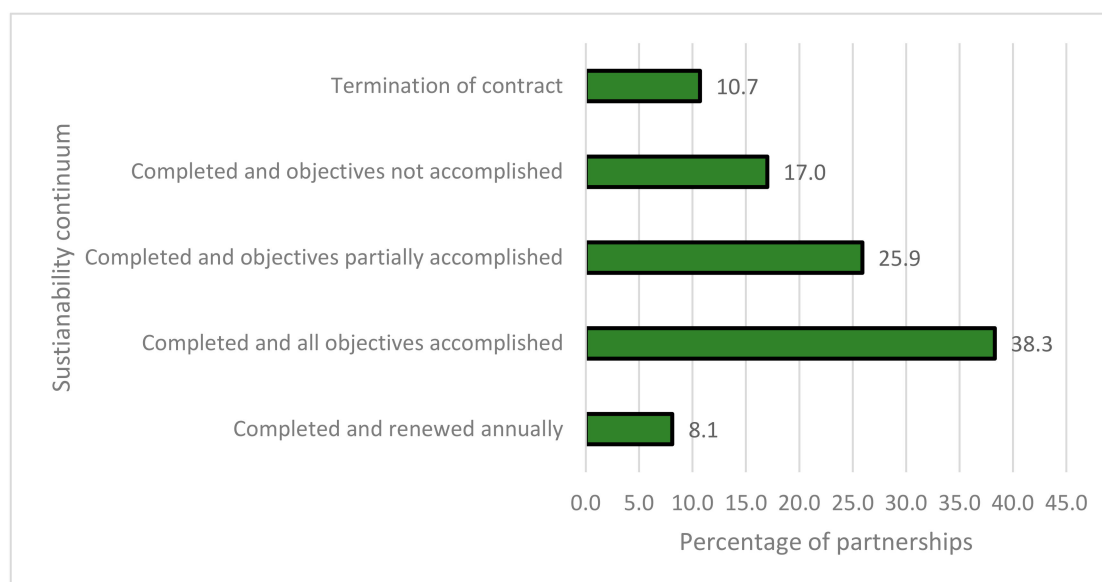


Figure 10. Distribution of the partnerships according to the evaluative party.

#### 4.4.3. Continuum of the Partnership's Maintenance

The situation of the partnerships analyzed after completion is highlighted in Figure 11. The results confirmed that more than one-third of the corporations (38.3%) were successful in achieving their objectives. Nevertheless, 27.7% of the partnerships failed to obtain the confidence of the partners. Such partnerships did not accomplish the planned objectives or were terminated. In terms of the sustainability of a partnership, it is noteworthy that around 8% of the partnerships were renewed annually.



**Figure 11.** Sustainability continuum of the partnerships.

## 5. Discussion

The literature on the role of NPOs in sustainable development points to the increasing linkages between development cooperation actors and NPOs. However, very few studies have systematically examined how the roles of NPOs differ across various actors. Thus, our picture of NPOs involvement in development is incomplete. The present study makes a unique contribution to the literature by mapping engagement between NPOs and other actors for sustainable development. It builds on the existing literature and analytical framework in order to conduct a systematic examination of 459 partnerships established between the charitable associations and the other actors in the study area.

Our results confirmed the role of the Saudi government through Vision 2030 in supporting partnerships between NPOs and other actors. Developing a conducive environment for partnerships can help in the implementation of policies and contribute toward the achievement of the sustainable development agenda [101]. In the light of Saudi Vision 2030 and the objectives set by the National Transformation Program 2020 [50], the government aims to empower NPOs in providing social services through implementing development initiatives and to improve the contribution of NPOs in GDP from less than 1% to 5%, by 2030. International success stories around this issue confirm that building partnerships play a significant role in solving many constraints faced by NPOs. In other words, the sum is greater than the individual parts [102].

The study's findings showed that partnerships in the Saudi Arabian context aimed to target various stakeholders, which, in turn, demonstrates the linkages between SDG 17—Partnerships for the Goals and some of the other more specific SDGs. In this context, the results suggest that partnerships between NPOs and other actors facilitate the design and implementation of programs that eradicate poverty in rural and urban areas (SDG 1). Partnerships also facilitate access to markets, natural resources, credit, information, and social protection by providing food for smallholders and ensuring sustainable

livelihoods for all, including women, youth, and children (SDG 2). It was also noticed from the results that health services attract the attention of potential partners to engage in collaborations. Full access to affordable, quality health services and psychosocial support for all vulnerable populations have high potential to accelerate progress for SDG 3—Good Health and Well-being. As mentioned in our findings, the cases of women—widows, divorcees, and victims of domestic violence—were addressed in 38.1% of the partnerships, and such collaborations have the potential to enable the mainstreaming of gender equality and empowering of all women and girls (SDG 5). The successful implementation of SDG 5 is also key to the 2030 Agenda, which aims to eradicate poverty and enhance prosperity, as well as promote healthy ecosystems and peaceful societies [4]. The study's findings also highlighted the importance of improving the financial stability of NPOs, with leveraging resources being the most important motives in most of the partnerships. Attracting private sector finance for infrastructure development is critical for economic and social development, improving environmental sustainability, reducing poverty and inequality, and ensuring decent work for all (SDG 9) [31]. Generally, it was concluded that SDG 17—Partnerships for the Goals, should empower NPOs to implement the other SDGs through collaboration with other actors, in order to create value for nature and society by sharing knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources [103].

A relevant framework for identifying value creation in partnerships is offered by Austin and Seitanidi [90]. Collaborative work between the actors is expected to create four different types of value: associational value, transferred resource value, interaction value, and synergistic value. Associational value is defined as “a derived benefit accruing to another partner simply from having a collaborative relationship with the other organization” [90] (p. 730); transferred resource value as a “benefit derived by a partner from the receipt of a resource from the other partner [90] (p. 731); interaction value as “the intangibles that derive from the processes of partners working together” [90] (p. 731); and synergistic value as “value that arises from the underlying premise of all collaborations that combining partners' resources enables them to accomplish more together than they could have separately” [90] (p. 731).

The findings on the drivers of the partnerships confirmed that most associations recognized the importance of CSR for corporation actors as a tool to enhance their reputation and legitimacy. Smart organizations nowadays understand that CSR activities are oriented toward building and renewing natural, social, and human capital as value-creation opportunities for sustainability [104]. As indicated by Poret [105], increasing the engagement of corporations with NPOs in CSR activities is not only an altruistic strategy. These organizations have networks along with knowledge, experience, skills, and resources in the societal issues that firms and other actors face. Therefore, for a more practical purpose, selecting the right partner and establishing a coordination committee between partners before a partnership engagement are absolutely critical steps to the success of a CSR strategy [31]. In this context, Fontana [106] identified the urgent need for an informed view of charitable organizations' expectations before initiating collaboration. This view included determining whether charities' resources allow the partner to improve its CSR efforts at present and in the future, as well as whether collaboration by charities has the potential to become long-term [105]. Undoubtedly, the extent to which charities and other actors find compromise should be based on the balance between mission integrity and CSR outcomes, which may require performing forecasting metrics [107].

The results reported that acquiring financial resources is one of the most crucial motives for charitable associations to engage in partnering. Moreover, obtaining funds is considered as an exclusion criterion for potential partners. In the literature, the charities are pro-socially motivated. In other words, they are concentrated on their activities to produce a public good [108,109]. This orientation forces these organizations to find new sources of funding to achieve their mission [110]. However, focusing only on obtaining funds may produce a mismatch within the partnership and may lead to difficulties in working together [32]. In fact, most actors, in particular, private sector actors, are mainly concerned with strategic partnerships that could maximize long-term mutual benefit [78]. Hence, the charitable

association should change its strategy from being donation-oriented toward leveraging complementary resources in order to use a partnership as a source of competitive advantage [31].

The study's findings also revealed significant private sector engagement in the majority of the partnerships investigated. In recent years, governments worldwide have given special attention to expanding the involvement of the private sector to achieve SDGs [111]. Such a trend goes beyond the traditional impacts of the private sector in development, such as the provision of goods and services, job creation, and economic growth [112]. This important shift changes the role of the private sector into that of a key partner for using market-based approaches to generate sustainable change [30]. Nevertheless, the engagement between NPOs and private actors may have the potential to facilitate joint problem solving and turn divergent interests into new sources of innovation [113].

Our results also showed that philanthropic partnerships are more common in the majority of the partnerships. This conclusion is supported by our findings that higher numbers of engagements involve transfers of financial resources rather than technical cooperation, capacity development, and entrepreneurship. This result may explain why only 8% of the partnerships examined are renewed after completion. Furthermore, not all partnerships are designed to be 'sustained' forever. Many partnerships are purposefully designed to be short-term projects. Just because they are terminated, it may not mean they were not successful, and the termination does not necessarily signal that "they did not accomplish the planned objectives". Therefore, determining the size and type of partnership is an issue. As suggested by KPMG [91], it is important to analyze the partner's motivation and to identify the "sweet spot" between development goals and business opportunities. Understanding such balance enables NPOs to combine both philanthropic and strategic approaches [78]; in other words, implement some marketing-oriented activities to improve businesses' public image and plan to conduct core-business activities [113]. This transformation empowers NPOs to achieve their objectives effectively and benefit from such investments as sustainable finance for their activities [52].

The results demonstrated that systematic evaluation is rarely conducted to measure the impacts of the partnerships implemented. Moreover, among the evaluation tools used, a small number of partnerships used tools for measuring the impacts such as logic model and SROI. On the basis of the official documents analyzed, it was observed that associations only provide general information on the number of partnerships or the expected results of their partnership initiatives, but it seems that relatively little has been done to monitor and evaluate partnership processes and outcomes. This may be attributed to a lack of employee skills and experience required to professionally conduct such frameworks and to the weak awareness of the importance of conducting an evaluation for the partnerships or how partners can benefit from the results of the assessment in the future. According to Rieker [100], application of evaluation methodologies allows individuals and organizations to access consolidated information that indicates a partnership's progress, increased experience, and knowledge; reveals mistakes; contributes to transparency and accountability; and offers paths for learning and improvement. This information gap allows an assessment of whether cross-sector partnerships are effective. However, the application of evaluation tools and frameworks would help generate systematized evidence on the relationships between engagement of NPOs and improved outcomes [113].

Some limitations should be acknowledged. First, we collected data from the Riyadh region in the center of Saudi Arabia, so we could not generalize the results to other regions or other countries. In other words, these results are from the Saudi context only, and in other contexts, the results would differ. Second, our analysis focuses only on charitable associations. This may lead to an inability to present a full picture of the sustainability-oriented partnerships across different kinds of NPOs. Third, the research was designed to collect data about organizations from only the association perspective, without considering the view of other partners. Thus, this approach could bias the results of the current situation of the partnerships investigated. Although our analytical framework covers various areas regarding a partnership's description, one critical point, such as the area of governance structure, was not addressed. This could affect our understanding of how



the governance model supports a partnership's operation, including decision-making, accountability, and regulatory compliance.

## 6. Conclusions

The present study investigated the partnerships established between charitable associations and development cooperation actors in Saudi Arabia. As there has been limited literature on this topic in the context of Saudi Arabia, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the field of sustainability-oriented partnerships, by highlighting four main areas: drivers, motivations, characteristics of the partnerships, and outcomes achieved. The results suggest that partnerships established by NPOs have the potential to play a key role in achieving the SDGs by optimizing the use of mutual resources in ways that can, together, achieve more impact, greater sustainability, and increased value to all partners. We found that, despite the impressive number of partnership agreements signed during 2016–2018, only 10.3% of the engagements are characterized as strategic partnerships. Moreover, only 8.1% of these partnerships were renewed after completion. The findings also showed that financial stability was the key motivator for corporations. It was also found that leveraging non-financial resources, and awareness of cultural issues, knowledge, and skills, attracted actors to engage with charitable associations in partnerships. Limited evidence about the social impacts of the partnerships was recognized because the evaluation tools and frameworks did not apply to the majority of the partnerships. The findings provide useful directions and implications for policy-makers. Private sector actors should establish organizational strategies for NPOs' engagement, informed by their needs and activities, to leverage resources and support in a more complementary fashion. Furthermore, it is important to clearly articulate policy frameworks that guide development cooperation actors with NPOs, including objectives, institutional and legal forms, and expected outcomes. Such actions will help with demonstrating transparency in actors' engagements, as well as with ensuring accountability for outcomes. Additionally, entrepreneurship activities should be included as important modalities for engaging NPOs in sustainable development. Therefore, strategic efforts to encourage such activities might present new opportunities for maximizing outcomes. Finally, there is an urgent need to improve the availability of monitoring and evaluation results on engagements with NPOs. Efforts are needed to develop and implement more rigorous methodologies that systematically assess the value of engagements. Implementing such methodologies can improve the accuracy of information, build confidence that these partnerships can support positive development outcomes, and encourage future collaborative efforts. A number of essential areas for future research arise from this study. Further research could look at different types of NPOs. There is a need for detailed review of actual partnerships to assess which NPOs are benefiting from engagement with other actors. In a related vein, research on the effectiveness of the governance model adopted in cases of engagement between NPOs and other actors is critical. Such studies generate a better understanding of the relationship dynamics between actors and what constitutes successful engagement. Furthermore, investigating context-specific obstacles for NPOs engagements should also be highlighted.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, H.S.K.; Formal analysis, M.A. and B.A.A.; Funding acquisition, H.S.K.; Resources, M.A. and R.G.; Software, M.A.; Supervision, H.S.K.; Visualization, B.A.A.; Writing—review & editing, H.S.K. and R.G. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This research was funded by the Deputyship for Research & Innovation, Ministry of Education, Saudi Arabia, through the project number DRI-KSU-SS-488.

**Acknowledgments:** The authors are grateful to the Deanship of Scientific Research and RSSU at the King Saud University for their technical support. We are also grateful to all employees of the associations who supported data collection.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

- Hasanov, R.; Jahangirli, N. *Social Economy for Azerbaijan: A Key Component of Sustainable Development*; Bittner, V.A., Ed.; Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD): Baku, Azerbaijan, 2018; pp. 5–35. Available online: <http://cesd.az/new/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/CESD-Paper-Social-Economy-Azerbaijan.pdf> (accessed on 12 April 2020).
- Dzhengiz, T.A. Literature review of inter-organizational sustainability learning. *Sustainability* **2020**, *12*, 4876. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Yan, X.; Lin, H.; Clarke, A. Cross-sector social partnerships for social change: The roles of non-governmental organizations. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 558. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Hille, I.V.; Bakker, F.G.d.; Ferguson, J.E.; Groenewegen, P. Cross-sector partnerships for sustainability: How mission-driven conveners drive change in national coffee platforms. *Sustainability* **2020**, *12*, 2846. [[CrossRef](#)]
- United Nations. Transforming our World: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development. In *Outcome Document for the United Nations Summit to Adopt the Post 2015 Development Agenda*; United Nations: New York, NY, USA, 2015.
- Stibbe, D.; Prescott, D. *An Introduction to Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships*; The Partnering Initiative: Oxford, UK, 2016.
- United Nations. Towards global partnerships. In *A Principle-Based Approach to Enhanced Cooperation between the United Nations and all Relevant Partners*; UN General Assembly, A/RES/70/224; UNGA: New York, NY, USA, 2015.
- Landin, S.A. Social economy as the means to help achieve the targets of sustainable development goal 14. *Sustainability* **2020**, *12*, 4529. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Hansen, E.G.; Spitzack, H. Measuring the impacts of NGO partnerships: The corporate and societal benefits of community involvement. *Corp. Gov.* **2011**, *11*, 415–426. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Ceptureanu, S.I.; Ceptureanu, E.G.; Bogdan, V.L.; Radulescu, V. Sustainability perceptions in Romanian non-profit organizations: An exploratory study using success factor analysis. *Sustainability* **2018**, *10*, 294. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Cojocaru, Ş.; Sfetcu, L. Partnerships in social economy. *Procedia Soc. Behav. Sci.* **2013**, *92*, 197–201. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Maier, F.; Meyer, M.; Steinbereithner, M. Nonprofit organizations becoming business-like: A systematic review. *Nonprofit Volunt. Sect. Q.* **2016**, *45*, 64–86. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Dart, R. Being “business-like” in a nonprofit organization: A grounded and inductive typology. *Nonprofit Volunt. Sect. Q.* **2004**, *33*, 290–310. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Hvenmark, J. Business as usual? On managerialization and the adoption of the balanced scorecard in a democratically governed civil society organization. *Adm. Theory Prax.* **2013**, *35*, 223–247.
- Alexander, J.A.; Weiner, B. The adoption of the corporate governance model by nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit Manag. Leadersh.* **1998**, *8*, 223–242. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Horwitz, M. Corporate reorganization—The last gasp or last clear chance for the tax-exempt, nonprofit hospital? *Am. J. Law Med.* **1988**, *13*, 527–559. [[PubMed](#)]
- Eikenberry, A.M.; Kluver, J.D. The marketization of the nonprofit sector: Civil society at risk? *Public Adm. Rev.* **2004**, *64*, 132–140. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Salamon, L. The marketization of welfare: Changing nonprofit and for-profit roles in the American welfare state. *Soc. Serv. Rev.* **1993**, *67*, 16–39. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Helm, S.T.; Andersson, F.O. Beyond taxonomy: An empirical validation of social entrepreneurship in the nonprofit sector. *Nonprofit Manag. Leadersh.* **2010**, *20*, 259–276. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Davis, J.A.; Marino, L.D.; Aaron, J.R.; Tolbert, C.L. An examination of entrepreneurial orientation, environmental scanning, and market strategies of nonprofit and for profit nursing home administrators. *Nonprofit Volunt. Sect. Q.* **2011**, *40*, 197–211. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Salamon, L. The nonprofit sector at a crossroads: The case of America. *Voluntas* **1999**, *10*, 5–23. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Hwang, H.; Powell, W.W. The rationalization of charity: The influences of professionalism in the nonprofit sector. *Adm. Sci. Q.* **2009**, *54*, 268–298. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Moody, M. Building a culture: The construction and evolution of venture philanthropy as a new organizational field. *Nonprofit. Volunt. Sect. Q.* **2008**, *37*, 324–352. [[CrossRef](#)]

24. Wagner, L. The “new” donor: Creation or evolution? *Int. J. Nonprofit Volunt. Sect. Mark.* **2002**, *7*, 343–352. [[CrossRef](#)]
25. Goddeeris, J.; Weisbrod, B. Conversion from nonprofit to for-profit legal status: Why does it happen and should anyone care? *J. Policy Anal. Manag.* **1998**, *17*, 215–233. [[CrossRef](#)]
26. Topal, C. A narrative construction of the organization by an external party: The non governmental organization narrative by the United Nations. *TAMARA J. Crit. Postmod. Organ. Sci.* **2008**, *7*, 111–125.
27. Vestergaard, A. Humanitarian branding and the media: The case of Amnesty International. *J. Lang. Politics* **2008**, *7*, 471–493. [[CrossRef](#)]
28. Kreutzer, K.; Jäger, U. Volunteering versus managerialism: Conflict over organizational identity in voluntary associations. *Nonprofit. Volunt. Sect. Q.* **2011**, *40*, 634–661. [[CrossRef](#)]
29. Ber, M.J.L.; Branzei, O. Value frame fusion in cross sector interactions. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2010**, *94*, 163–195. [[CrossRef](#)]
30. Sanzo, M.J.; Álvarez, L.L.; Rey, M. Lights and shadows of business-nonprofit partnerships: The role of nonprofit learning and empowerment in this ethical puzzle. *Sustainability* **2017**, *9*, 1410. [[CrossRef](#)]
31. Poret, S. Corporate–NGO partnerships through sustainability labeling schemes: Motives and risks. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 2689. [[CrossRef](#)]
32. Chan, M. Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Emergence, Adaptation and Impacts in Global and Domestic Governance Contexts. Ph.D. Thesis, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2014.
33. Tulder, R.V.; Seitanidi, M.M.; Crane, A.; Brammer, S. Enhancing the impact of cross-sector partnerships. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2016**, *135*, 1–17. [[CrossRef](#)]
34. Waddock, S. Building successful social partnerships. *MIT Sloan Manag. Rev.* **1998**, *29*, 17–19.
35. Waddock, S. A typology of social partnership organizations. *Adm. Soc.* **1991**, *22*, 4. [[CrossRef](#)]
36. Stafford, E.R.; Polonsky, M.J.; Hartman, C.L. Environmental NGO-business collaboration and strategic bridging: A case analysis of the Greenpeace-Foron alliance. *Bus. Strategy Environ.* **2000**, *9*, 122–135. [[CrossRef](#)]
37. Hartmann, C.; Hofman, P.S.; Stafford, E.R. Partnerships: A path to sustainability. *Bus. Strategy Environ.* **1999**, *8*, 255–266. [[CrossRef](#)]
38. Hartman, C.L.; Stafford, E.R. Green alliances: Building new business with environmental groups. *Long Range Plan.* **1997**, *30*, 184–196. [[CrossRef](#)]
39. Crane, A. Exploring green alliances. *J. Mark. Manag.* **1998**, *14*, 559–579. [[CrossRef](#)]
40. Nevidjon, B. Partnerships of the future. *Semin. Oncol. Nurs.* **2016**, *32*, 164–171. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
41. Runhaar, H.; Polman, N. Partnering for nature conservation NGO-farmer collaboration for meadow bird protection in the Netherlands. *Land Use Policy* **2018**, *73*, 11–19. [[CrossRef](#)]
42. Ferraro, F.; Etzion, D.; Gehman, J. Tackling grand challenges pragmatically: Robust action revisited. *Organ. Stud.* **2015**, *36*, 363–390. [[CrossRef](#)]
43. George, G.; Howard-Grenville, J.; Tihanyi, L. Understanding and tackling societal grand challenges through management research. *Acad. Manag. J.* **2016**, *59*, 1880–1895. [[CrossRef](#)]
44. Mendel, S.C.; Brudney, J.L. *Partnerships the Nonprofit Way: What Matters, What Doesn't*; Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, USA, 2018.
45. Commonwealth Corporation. *Partnerships: A Workforce Development Practitioner's Guide*; Workforce Development in Practice Series: Boston, MA, USA, 2013.
46. The Royal Institute of International Affairs. *Civil Society in Saudi Arabia: The Power and Challenges of Association*; The Royal Institute of International Affairs: London, UK, 2015.
47. MLC. *Statistical Year Book*; Ministry of Labor and Social Development: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2019.
48. Mohamed, H.A. Non-profit organizations in Saudi Arabia: Reforming to achieve the Kingdom vision-2030 goals. *Int. J. Hum. Soc. Sci.* **2018**, *8*, 38–44.
49. Altuwaijri, D. Non-Profit Organizations in Saudi Arabia: An Analysis of Impact Assessment Tools. Master's Thesis, University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, USA, 2017.
50. Government of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Towards Saudi Arabia's sustainable tomorrow. In Proceedings of the UN High-Level Political Forum 2018: Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies, New York, NY, USA, 9–18 July 2018.
51. Government of Saudi Arabia. *National Transformation Program Delivery Plan 2018–2020*; Government of Saudi Arabia: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2018.

52. Gray, B.; Stites, J.P. *Sustainability through Partnerships: Capitalizing on Collaboration*; Network for Business Sustainability: London, ON, Canada, 2013.
53. Sterne, R.; Heaney, D.; Britton, B. *The Partnership Toolbox*; WWF-UK: Godalming, Surrey, UK, 2001.
54. Glasbergen, P. *Partnerships, Governance and Sustainable Development: Reflections on Theory and Practice*; Glasbergen, P., Biermann, F., Mol, A., Eds.; Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, UK, 2007.
55. Huijstee, M.M.; Francken, M.; Leroy, P. Partnerships for sustainable development: A review of current literature. *Environ. Sci.* **2007**, *4*, 75–89. [[CrossRef](#)]
56. Bansal, P.; Roth, K. Why companies go green: A model of ecological responsiveness. *Acad. Manag. J.* **2000**, *43*, 717–736.
57. Argenti, P.A. Collaborating with activists: How Starbucks works with NGOs. *Calif. Manag. Rev.* **2004**, *47*, 91–116. [[CrossRef](#)]
58. Austin, J.E. *The Collaborative Challenge*; Harvard Business School Press: Boston, MA, USA, 2000.
59. Choi, C.J.; Kim, S.W. NGOs: The dual “voice” and institutional knowledge transfer. *J. Int. Bus. Ethics* **2010**, *3*, 56–68.
60. Egels-Zandén, N.; Hyllman, P. Exploring the effects of union–NGO relationships on corporate responsibility: The case of the Swedish clean clothes campaign. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2006**, *64*, 303–316. [[CrossRef](#)]
61. Pattberg, P. The influence of global business regulation: Beyond good corporate conduct. *Bus. Soc. Rev.* **2006**, *111*, 241–268. [[CrossRef](#)]
62. Kapelus, P. Mining, corporate social responsibility and the community: The case of Rio Tinto, Richards Bay minerals and the Mbonambi. *J. Bus. Ethics.* **2002**, *39*, 275–296. [[CrossRef](#)]
63. Mena, S.; Palazzo, G. Input and output legitimacy of multi-stakeholder initiatives. *Bus. Ethics Q.* **2012**, *3*, 527–556. [[CrossRef](#)]
64. Sinh, B.T. Government and NGO partnership in managing community-based water resources in Vietnam: A case study of Thai Long Dam Project. *Bus. Strategy Environ.* **2002**, *11*, 119–129. [[CrossRef](#)]
65. Nikoloyuk, J.; Burns, T.R.; Man, R.d. The promise and limitations of partnered governance: The case of sustainable palm oil. *Corp. Gov.* **2010**, *10*, 59–72. [[CrossRef](#)]
66. Kolk, A.; Tulder, R.v.; Kostwinder, E. Business and partnerships for development. *Eur. Manag. Rev.* **2008**, *26*, 262–273. [[CrossRef](#)]
67. Darko, E. *Private Sector and NGO Engagement: Descriptive List of the Main Ways the Private Sector and NGOs Currently Collaborate in Development Work*; EPS PEAKS: London, UK, 2014.
68. Austin, J.E.; Seitanidi, M.M. Collaborative value creation: A review of partnering between nonprofits and businesses: Part I. Value creation spectrum and collaboration stages. *Nonprofit. Volunt. Sect. Q.* **2012**, *41*, 726–758. [[CrossRef](#)]
69. Kindornay, S.; Tissot, S.; Sheiban, N. *The Value of Cross-Sector Development Partnerships*; The North-South Institute: Ottawa, ON, Canada, 2014.
70. Dahan, N.M.; Doh, J.P.; Oetzel, J.; Yaziji, M. Corporate-NGO collaboration: Co-creating new business models for developing markets. *Long Range Plan.* **2010**, *43*, 326–342. [[CrossRef](#)]
71. Bobenrieth, M.E.; Stibbe, D. *Changing Trends in Business-NGO Partnerships: A Netherlands Perspective*; The Partnering Initiative: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2010.
72. Den Hond, F.; De Bakker, F.; Doh, J. What prompts companies to collaboration with NGOs? Recent evidence from the Netherlands. *Bus. Soc.* **2015**, *54*, 187–228. [[CrossRef](#)]
73. Vock, M.; Dolen, W.v.; Kolk, A. Micro-level interactions in business-nonprofit partnerships. *Bus. Soc.* **2014**, *53*, 517–550. [[CrossRef](#)]
74. Bowen, F.; Newenham-Kahindi, A.; Herremans, I. When suits meet roots: The antecedents and consequences of community engagement strategy. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2010**, *95*, 297–318. [[CrossRef](#)]
75. Holzer, B. Turning stake seekers into stakeholders: A political coalition perspective on the politics of stakeholder influence. *Bus. Soc.* **2008**, *47*, 50–67. [[CrossRef](#)]
76. Lee, L. Business-community partnerships: Understanding the nature of partnership. *Corp. Gov.* **2011**, *11*, 29–40. [[CrossRef](#)]
77. Idemudia, U. Oil extraction and poverty reduction in the Niger Delta: A critical examination of partnership initiatives. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2009**, *90*, 91–116. [[CrossRef](#)]
78. Byiers, B.; Guadagno, F.; Karaki, K. *From Looking Good to Doing Good: Mapping CSO-Business Partnerships*; ECDPM Discussion Paper 182; ECDPM: Maastricht, The Netherlands, 2015.

79. Wymer, W.W.; Samu, S. Dimensions of business and nonprofit collaborative relationships. *J. Nonprofit Public Sect. Mark.* **2003**, *11*, 3–22. [CrossRef]
80. Barroso-Méndez, M.J.; Galera-Casquet, C.; Seitanidi, M.M.; Valero-Amaro, V. Cross-sector social partnership success: A process perspective on the role of relational factors. *Eur. Manag. J.* **2016**, *34*, 674–685. [CrossRef]
81. Tennyson, R.; Gray, T.; Lobo, I. *Emerging Opportunities for NGO-business Partnerships: Feedback from the Cross-Sector Partnership Project*; World Vision International: Uxbridge, London, UK, 2008; Available online: <https://thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Emerging-opportunities-for-NGO-business-partnerships1.pdf> (accessed on 9 March 2020).
82. Menden, A.; Vleuten, N.v.d.; Pirzer, C.; Blomberg, I.v. *NGO and Company Partnerships for Inclusive Business*; Endeava: Berlin, Germany, 2019; Available online: <https://endeava.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ngo-and-company-partnerships-for-inclusive-business.pdf> (accessed on 3 February 2020).
83. O’Caoimh, C. *Alliances with the Private Sector: Mapping Irish NGO Engagements*; Dóchas: Dublin, Ireland, 2017; Available online: [https://dochas.ie/sites/default/files/Alliances%20with%20the%20Private%20Sector%20-%20D%C3%B3chas2017\\_2.pdf](https://dochas.ie/sites/default/files/Alliances%20with%20the%20Private%20Sector%20-%20D%C3%B3chas2017_2.pdf) (accessed on 15 January 2020).
84. Carroll, C.E. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Corporate Reputation*; SAGE Publications Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2016.
85. Danish Red Cross. *Cross-Sector Partnership Guideline*; Danish Red Cross: Copenhagen, Denmark, 2016; Available online: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/no/Documents/strategy-operations/deloitte-cross-partnership-guideline.pdf> (accessed on 21 January 2020).
86. John Snow, Inc. *Engaging Your Community: A Toolkit for Partnership, Collaboration, and Action*; John Snow, Inc.: Boston, MA, USA, 2012.
87. OECD LEED. *Successful Partnerships: A Guide*. OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance; ZSI (Centre for Social Innovation): Vienna, Austria, 2006; Available online: <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/36279186.pdf> (accessed on 22 January 2020).
88. Afansa, K.; Habte, D.; Hatfield, J.; Murphy, J.; Neufeld, V. *Partnership Assessment Toolkit*; Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research (CCGHR): Ottawa, ON, Canada, 2009; Available online: [https://www.ccghr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/PAT\\_web\\_e.pdf](https://www.ccghr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/PAT_web_e.pdf) (accessed on 22 January 2020).
89. Austin, J.E. *The Collaboration Challenge: How Nonprofits and Businesses Succeed through Strategic Alliances*; Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA, USA, 2000.
90. Weihe, G. PPPs: Meaning and Practice. Ph.D. Thesis, Copenhagen Business School, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2008.
91. KPMG. *Consultancy on Private Sector Partnerships for Non-Governmental Organisations*; Norwegian Church Aid Report 16; KPMG: Amstelveen, The Netherlands, 2018; Available online: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b75620445776e4b290c0d96/t/5b87b1828a922d53efddae6b/1535619460041/Report+NCA+KPMG.pdf> (accessed on 14 March 2020).
92. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Evaluation Guide: Fundamentals of Evaluating Partnerships*; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Atlanta, GA, USA, 2008. Available online: [https://www.cdc.gov/dhbsp/docs/partnership\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/dhbsp/docs/partnership_guide.pdf) (accessed on 11 March 2020).
93. Suárez, D.F. Collaboration and professionalization: The contours of public sector funding for nonprofit organizations. *J. Public Adm. Res. Theory.* **2011**, *21*, 307–326. [CrossRef]
94. Austin, J.E.; Seitanidi, M.M. Collaborative value creation: A review of partnering between nonprofits and businesses. Part 2: Partnership processes and outcomes. *Nonprofit Volunt. Sect. Q.* **2012**, *41*, 929–968. [CrossRef]
95. GAS. *Population Characteristics Surveys*; General Authority for Statistics: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2017.
96. Jansen, H. The logic of qualitative survey research and its position in the field of social research methods. *Forum Qual. Soc. Res.* **2010**, *11*, 11. [CrossRef]
97. Srivastava, A.; Thomson, S.B. Framework analysis: A qualitative methodology for applied policy research. *JOAAG* **2009**, *4*, 72–79.
98. Lawes, C.; Rider, J.; Barratt, N. *Measuring the Satisfaction of Partners and Stakeholders on Behalf of the Pension, Disability and Carers Service*; Research Report No 692; Department for Work and Pensions: London, UK, 2010. Available online: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/193221/692summ.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/193221/692summ.pdf) (accessed on 11 October 2019).



99. Bilodeau, A.; Potvin, L.; Galarneau, M.; Sénécal, G.; Fournier, M.; Bernier, J. *Self-Evaluation Tool for Action in Partnership*; Health Nexus: Toronto, ON, Canada, 2017; Available online: <https://en.healthnexus.ca/sites/en.healthnexus.ca/files/resources/selfevaluationtool.pdf> (accessed on 29 December 2019).
100. Rieker, P.P. *Partnership Evaluation: Guidebook and Resources*; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Atlanta, GA, USA, 2011. Available online: <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/PartnershipEvaluation.pdf?viewType=Print&viewClass=Print> (accessed on 1 April 2020).
101. Horan, D. A new approach to partnerships for SDG transformations. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 4947. [CrossRef]
102. Stibbe, D.T.; Reid, S.; Gilbert, J. Maximising the Impact of Partnerships for the SDGs, the Partnering Initiative and UN DESA. 2018. Available online: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2564Maximising\\_the\\_impact\\_of\\_partnerships\\_for\\_the\\_SDGs.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2564Maximising_the_impact_of_partnerships_for_the_SDGs.pdf) (accessed on 19 June 2020).
103. Buhmann, K.; Jonsson, J.; Fisker, M. Do no harm and do more good too: Connecting the SDGs with business and human rights and political CSR theory. *Corp. Gov. Int. J. Bus. Soc.* **2019**, *19*, 389–403. [CrossRef]
104. Seitanidi, M.M.; Crane, A. Implementing CSR through partnerships: Understanding the selection, design and institutionalization of nonprofit-business partnerships. *J. Bus. Ethics.* **2009**, *85*, 413–429. [CrossRef]
105. Poret, S. Corporate-NGO Partnerships in CSR Activities: Why and How. Research Paper No. 01070474; HAL. 2014. Available online: <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01070474> (accessed on 28 May 2020).
106. Fontana, E. Corporate social responsibility as stakeholder engagement: Firm–NGO collaboration in Sweden. *Corp. Soc. Responsib. Environ. Mgmt.* **2018**, *25*, 327–338. [CrossRef]
107. Skouloudis, A.; Evangelinos, K.; Malesios, C. Priorities and perceptions for corporate social responsibility: An NGO perspective. *Corp. Soc. Responsib. Environ. Manag.* **2015**, *22*, 95–112. [CrossRef]
108. Heyes, A.; Martin, S. Social labeling by competing NGOs: A model with multiple issues and entry. *Manag. Sci.* **2017**, *63*, 1800–1813. [CrossRef]
109. Poret, S. Label battles: Competition among NGOs as standard setters. *J. Econ. Behav. Organ.* **2019**, *160*, 1–18. [CrossRef]
110. Brinckerhoff, P.C. *Mission-Based Management: Leading Your Not.-for-Profit in the 21st Century*; John Wiley & Sons: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2009.
111. Bitzer, V.; Glasbergen, P. Business–NGO partnerships in global value chains: Part of the solution or part of the problem of sustainable change? *Curr. Opin. Environ. Sust.* **2015**, *12*, 35–40. [CrossRef]
112. Kindornay, S.; Reilly-King, F. *Investing in the Business of Development: Bilateral Donor Approaches to Engaging the Private Sector*; The North-South Institute and Canadian Council for International Co-operation: Ottawa, ON, Canada, 2013; Available online: <http://www.nsi-ins.ca/publications/investing-in-the-business-of-development/> (accessed on 3 April 2019).
113. Tulder, J.; Grant, A.; Kindornay, S.; Tissot, S. *Mapping Private Sector Engagements in Development Cooperation*; The North-South Institute: Ottawa, ON, Canada, 2013; Available online: <http://www.nsi-ins.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Mapping-PS-Engagement-in-Development-Cooperation-Final.pdf> (accessed on 3 April 2019).



© 2020 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).