Partnerships for profit and impact: Partner roles in an NGO-led BOP business venture development

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Abstract of master's thesis

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to detect how partner roles unfold in an NGO-led business development programme that combines development and business goals at the bottom/base of the pyramid markets. Partnerships with NGOs are widely recognised in the literature as a useful means for companies to enter low-income markets. However, how the partnership process evolves is studied less.

My data consist of nine-month period of participatory observation / action research in Weconomy Start programme that helps companies find new business opportunities in cocreation with low-income communities in India and Sri Lanka.

I use a framework by Tulder and Kostwinder (2007) to describe the partnership process and reflect these with my empirical data. Then I build a stakeholder map to show the connections between all partners and classify them by using the roles defined by Peterman (2013). In my study I found an integrator, a director, a sharer, a user, and an outsider. I point out that without shared financing and constant negotiation on both programme and organization specific goals, all partners tend to stick to their old roles and individual objectives.

Keywords bottom/base of the pyramid, partnership, role	

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Many of the recent business ventures at the bottom of the pyramid have been inspired by C. K. Prahalad's work (for instance Prahalad and Hammond 2002, Prahalad and Hart 2002) on finding a fortune among the people who consume and earn very little and have therefore not been effectively included in the capitalist system. Prahalad claimed that businesses should take this opportunity and find new markets when the competition in developed world is harsh and markets are saturated. At the same time, being included in the capitalist system would, more effectively than traditional aid, help to alleviate the problems people living in poverty face. Very soon it became clear that this was easier said than done. Only a small number of the business ventures at the bottom of the pyramid succeeded. The needs and desires of the poor were often misinterpreted, institutions to support business were weak, or at least different from the ones familiar to businesses, values of the new customer segments were unknown, and companies often faced distrust (e.g. Gollakota and al 2010).

A new panacea was soon come up with: partnerships were now the key to economic success and the solution to fasten development and alleviate poverty. The use of terms was also adjusted: instead of talking about creating a fortune at the bottom of the pyramid it was now called creating a fortune *with* the BOP (London and Hart 2010). Partnerships between business and third sector were no longer seen as straightforward give and take efforts, but as strategic initiatives, including core activities from both parties.

The benefits for companies for partnering with NGOs have often been listed as follows: 1) knowledge of the local conditions, 2) access to people and decision makers and 3) help to gain trust in BOP communities (e. g. London and Hart 2010). But it has also been recognized that NGOs and companies have different ways of operating and obviously also different final goals and all these should be negotiated to create sustainable business as well as to achieve positive impact in low-income communities (e. g. Ashman 2001, Kolk and al 2008, Tulder and Phisterer 2008). What are the ways to overcome these differences and find solutions still remains largely unanswered.

1.2 Research gap

Perhaps because of the original focus of the BOP approach was to make money, cross sector partnerships at the BOP context have been mainly composed and lead by private sector. Also the literature concentrates on describing how a company can gain advantage from working with an NGO partner (e. g. London and Hart 2004, Rivera-Santos and Rufin 2010, Reficco and Marquez 2012). How these alliances should be built to reach the NGO's or mutual goals is studied less.

At the moment an increasing number of NGOs are getting interested in inclusive business. In Finland at least World Vision, Plan, Save the Children and Unicef are all looking for new forms for corporate cooperation that go beyond traditional CSR approaches. Internationally the direction is the same. For instance a UK based consulting company C&E Advisory Services Limited states in their Corporate-NGO Partnerships barometer 2014 that the partnering agenda grows deeper roots as NGOs are starting to see benefits beyond cash and companies beyond reputation. While a similar report from 2008 still mainly emphasises CSR activities as the main reason for companies to partner with NGOs (Dalberg 2008).

This thesis looks at the partnership process from the NGO perspective. The case studied is Weconomy Start programme, a globally pioneering activity, bringing together World Vision, Aalto University, Finpro business consultancy and private companies as strategic partners to solve development problems profitably. The NGO, World Vision, is the coordinating partner aiming at broadening its own impact by helping companies to establish sustainable business in the low-income communities where WV works. The business has to have a co-creational component that positively affects the lives of the poor.

In this thesis I take a look at how this composition can affect the partner selection, goal alignment, roles that different players take in the process, interaction between the partners, and ownership of the process.

1.3 Research questions

The central theme in this thesis is the arrangement, where an NGO actively looks for company partners to develop new business and takes the lead in the beginning of the process. As some research has been done on companies looking for partners to fulfil their need at BOP markets (Gradl and al 2010), now an NGO led programme looks for companies to help reach NGO goals that can be radically different from those of the private sector. This mixes the roles and stakeholder relations that have been presented in former research. It also affects responsibilities that different

players have, risks that they face and ownership that they have over the process. To find answers I ask the following question:

- How do partner roles unfold in an NGO-led BOP venture development programme?

As a supporting question I also take a look on

- What are the characteristics of a company that starts developing its business with an NGO?

1.4 Definitions

I use widely in this study the following terms: *bottom of the pyramid* (BOP), *cocreation* and *inclusive business.*

Bottom of the pyramid is a term made known by professors C. K. Prahalad and Stuart Hart in the turn of the millennium (e. g. Prahalad and Hart 2002, Prahalad 2004, Hart 2005). It refers to the largest but poorest socio-economic group in the world consisting of three billion people living on less than 2.50 USD per day and a further billion living on less than 8 USD / day (Hammond and al, 2007, Gradl and Knobloch, 2010). The term *bottom* was later replaced by *base* as bottom was seen underrating. But as bottom is widely used in my case study material, I also use it in this thesis, although recognizing its negative tone in academic community.

The BOP market is commonly described as dominated by the informal economy, and as a result the market is relatively inefficient and uncompetitive by western standards. There is poor infrastructure, lack of a robust overall regulatory and legal framework, as well as fragmented and immature markets and lack of information. As a result, supply chains can be deep and complex, involving legions of contractors and subcontractors. Access to local networks is essential as in the absence of formal governance the informal economies are particularly dependent on social ties for effective functioning (Rivera-Santos and Rufin 2010). Low disposable incomes limit the amount that consumers can buy at any one time. Consumers in low-income segments have trouble saving money, given their shortage of liquidity. There is an excess of unskilled workforce and a pressing lack of skilled (Linna 2008).

Given the radically different market environment at the BOP, the term co-creation has come into use in finding new innovations to solve problems at the BOP (London and Hart 2004, Simanis and Hart 2009). The users are seen as experts and tools used are participatory. It is all about seeking dialogue and equal partnership between a company and a community resulting in shared commitment. According to Weconomy Start brochure "co-creation means that companies not only

observe and interview potential end-users, but also invite people to participate in innovation. The aim is to combine local people's knowledge of their needs and the environment with the technological and business knowledge of the company. Co-creation can allow co-discovery of solutions, which neither the foreign company nor the locals foresaw. It can lead to business, which can bring profits to the company and wellbeing to local people."
(http://www.worldvision.fi/userData/wvi/weconomy/Start-brochure-inclusive-business.pdf)

Inclusive business is business for profit, but contributes to poverty reduction through the inclusion of low-income communities in the value chain as producers, suppliers and/or consumers. In the background is the idea that people at the BOP are underserved. Including low-income communities into capitalist system would help solve their problems and companies' engagement in the challenging conditions would spur radical innovation (Gradl and Knobloch 2010).

1.5 Structure of the study

This study uses Tulder and Kostwinder's (2007) framework to analyse cross-sector partnership process that aims at development impact. I chose this framework as it is one of the few models that takes into account also non-profit goals.

The study starts with a review of current literature on BOP partnerships. I first introduce BOP environment as it appears in the literature. Then I present the structures and factors contributing to partnership formation with the help of Tulder and Kostwinder's model. I also present different ways to perceive partner roles. In my discussion section I use the framework and measures by Peterman (2013) and Peterman and al (2014) as they offer the most profound answers to my research questions. As a part of the literature review I also present stakeholder maps that help describe the relations that the partners in my case study had with each other.

After the literature review I present my case study and the partners involved in it and then proceed to explaining my research setting and methods. As a part of the data and methods section I present the core of my empirical material in two data tables.

The core data is supported by describing quotes in the analysis section. Findings and analysis link the empirical data together with Tulder and Kostwinder's model. As a result the discussion section is also built around the same framework deepening the themes by using a stakeholder map and Petermans (2013) understanding on partner roles.

In conclusions section I summarize the main findings and give recommendations for the management of cross-sector business development programmes and future research.

2 Cross-sector partnerships in BOP literature

Partnerships have become a central part of the BOP discussion after early criticism to Prahalad's straightforward approach to BOP markets. Now it is widely agreed that they are needed for successful business at the BOP markets (e. g. Rivera Santos and al 2012, Kolk and al 2008, Calton and al 2013). Even though the literature on BOP partnerships is rather new, it can borrow elements on the more established literature on the relations and partnerships between environmental organizations and companies as their co-existence and cooperation has started a lot earlier. The early articles using data from the environmental sector create a basis to describe strategic partnerships (e. g. Waddell 2000, Rondinelli and London 2003) and the later contributors (Peterman and al 2014, Peterman 2013) showcase more developed partner roles than the studies from the BOP sector.

In the BOP context partnerships between companies and NGOs have long meant companies donating funds to NGOs' causes and then using NGOs for adversarial purposes. In my study, I only look at partnerships where cross-sector partners jointly create a programme in which business capabilities are critical to solving development problems. They aim at being win-win relationships based on mutual gain in areas of strategic interest of all partners (Waddell 2000).

This section of the thesis looks at BOP partnerships from the beginning – identifying and choosing partners – to how these partnerships are implemented and what kind of risks they include and finally look at literature on the performance of the partnerships. Less has been said on the motivations, gains and risks of partnerships for NGOs. Rob van Tulder is one of the few researchers concentrating on the NGO side and evaluating partnerships not only by business success but also from the development point of view.

2.1 BOP business environment and partnerships

As bottom of the pyramid markets are low-income markets, most often located in the developing world and dominated by informal economy, they often feel distant and awkward for northern companies. During my interviews I noticed that in informal conversation even development professionals often refer to them as "these markets" or "these countries". In this chapter I review how "these markets" are conceptualized in academic literature.

Often "these markets" are described in contrast to developed markets via dichotomies like formal / informal and developed / developing. Rivera-Santos and Rufin (2010) make these distinctions

explicit by comparing the networks at the top of the pyramid (TOP) and at the bottom of the pyramid. Based on case studies they argue that at the bottom of the pyramid customers' incomes are low and irregular, and they live in extreme geographic locations. Local competitors are competitively weak, but strong if embedded in local environment. Local value chains lack suppliers, distributors and complementors. Physical, financial and informational infrastructures are weak. The formal institutional environment is weak due to weak legal enforcement and corruption. But informal institutional environment is strong as traditional ties within the community replace missing formal institutions. Due to this also the business networks are fundamentally different. Whereas at the TOP business relies on formal institutions, at the BOP the informal institutions are often more predictable and resilient.
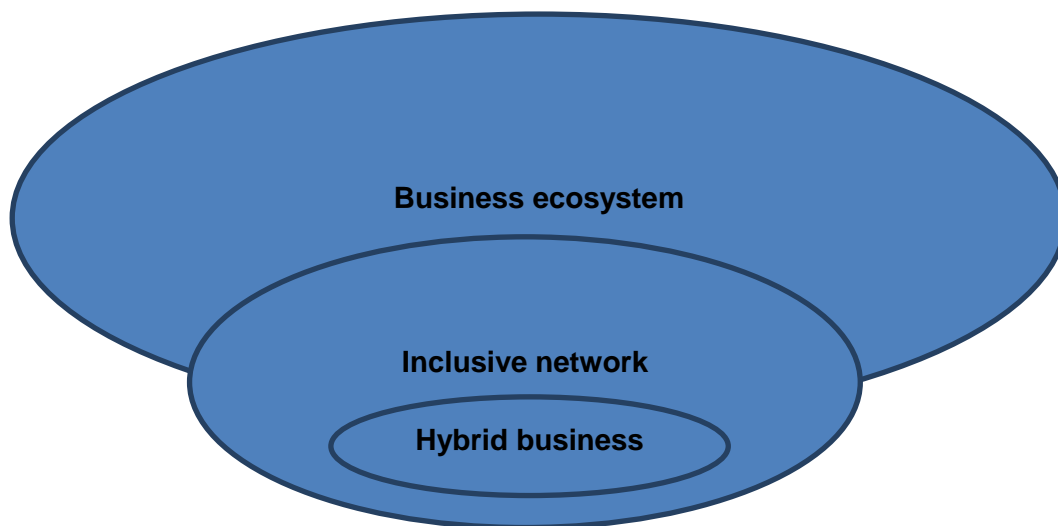
Picture 1, Reficco and Marquez (2012)

Reficco and Marquez (2012) describe the market and business networks at BOP including all players, culture, policies, finance and support happening within the *business ecosystem. Inclusive networks* are created when members of the ecosystem formalize their relationships and work closer, establishing common goals and procedure. When the goals and partners become more formalized they call the cooperation *hybrid value chain*. They point out that this term "stresses the fact that the ultimate goal of the actors involved in the alliance is to create value for customers… That is, firms and non-profits establish partnerships to create value as part of business value chain." They also point out that this may be too narrow a concept as nonmarket actors unavoidable also have a social nature. Therefore they call these arrangements *inclusive networks*, defined as "horizontal arrangements in which all parties share responsibility and performance outcomes without any party exercising authority or control over others".

Based on a wide literature review Tubergen and al (2014) list four main gains for companies deriving from BOP partnerships. These are 1) access to key inputs, which broadly mean networks that help facilitate innovations and mitigate risks. 2) Reputational, trust and legitimacy gains that are brought by an NGO's long term valuable work in the community. 3) Compensation for the lack of formal institutions that for instance help set up informal market regulations. And finally, 4) increased sustainability and social impact for the projects in the long run brought by deeper networks.

All this probably describes the vagueness of the definition of partnerships at the BOP. It is not always clear who should be seen as a partner and what kind of roles they need to play. In the end all partnerships are different, with different partners, goals and environments. Therefore I will next use a tool by Tulder and Kostwinder (2007) to evaluate the stages that partnerships typically go through.

2.2 Evaluating BOP partnerships

Figure 1 – An evaluation model for Development Partnerships

(A) INPUT	(B) THROUGHPUT	(C) OUTPUT	(D) OUTCOME
Goals, motives and resources of individual partners.	Partnership characteristics, dynamism and design.	Partnership objectives, sustainability and deliverables.	Impact: direct and indirect contribution of partnership to MDGs.

(E) EFFICIENCY
Costs Benefit
Critical success factors and lessons learned during process.

(F) EFFECTIVENESS
Added value of partnership to the participants and to the MDGs.

Picture 2. Source: Tulder and Kostwinder, 2007

Tulder and Kostwinder describe the stages of partnerships for development with a six-part model. Input, throughput, output and outcome form the partnership *process.* Efficiency, effectiveness and outcome *evaluate* the partnership in relation to external world. The idea behind this model is the presumption that partnerships go through comparable stages. This model is particularly useful for my study, as it aims at describing the success of the partnership from development point of view – not simply from company interest. For instance Reficco and Marquez's (2012) analysis, like vast majority of the research in the field, is based on nine case experiences from nine Latin American countries all arise from the companies' need to find partners to create business and therefore also

the analysis describes companies' experiences. This model by Tulder and Kostwinder measures the process as partnership's contribution to millennium development goals.

Therefore my literature review will loosely follow the structure of Val Tulder and Kostwinder's model. I will go through the points that they use for evaluating partnerships aiming at both business and societal goals. With the focus on partner roles, I will place my study mainly on internal characteristic (input, throughput, output) of partnerships as during my research period the partnerships were being built and no results at BOP markets were yet achieved. Outcome, efficiency and effectiveness will be shortly discussed in the discussion section. In the end I will also reflect the model with my data and analysis.

2.2.1 Input

Input to the partnership consists of the individual drivers and resources that each partner brings into the partnership. It is necessary that the drivers are complementary. For instance as companies often look for market expansion resulting from partnerships, public sector aims at stimulating local investments and NGO looks for a contribution to realizing their development goals. Looking at resources it is important to look at both material and soft resources. Who brings in the money, who has the technical skills, who has information and contacts? When partners complement each other, they are all dependent on each other to complete the project (Tulder and Kostwinder 2007).

Identifying partners

Based on the development of the discussion on doing business at the BOP, the vast majority of the academic literature has private companies as the starting point of BOP partnerships. The presupposition is that companies see possibilities at the BOP, but as the business there is different from their business as usual, they need help to succeed. The first sources of help identified were public sector, NGOs and other companies (e. g. Simanis and Hart). When the discussion evolved also community based organisations (CBO), people in the BOP, social enterprises and academia where included as possible partners (e. g. Kistruck and al 2013).

Therefore, the most central partners in the BOP business literature are *companies* seeking growth in largely untouched BOP markets when their home markets are becoming saturated (e. g. Prahalad and Hart 2002). Companies, namely multinational corporations, are seen to have the ability to form partnerships with a variety of organizations. They have the access to business resources and global value chains. They are seen to possess capital, and managerial expertise and experience and boost development by including new people in the market economy (Tubergen and al 2014). Recently, in contrast to Prahalad's early version on BOP, many now consider local companies potential BOP actors too (Kolk and al 2014).

Public sector also often plays a major role as a BOP partner. A difference should be made between local authorities and national government in BOP area. Public sector can decrease the

risks by providing financial support and bring various companies together. But it also has power over companies activities related to human rights, economic and social protection and support possibly creating tension in the partnership (Tubergen and al 2014).

As BOP markets are often unknown to large companies they look for help from *NGOs* that have a long history in operating in developing world. They can bring companies knowledge of local market needs, they help to create credibility and acceptance for the project and they often possess recruiting, education and training experience in the BOP (e.g. Simanis and Hart 2009, Rivera-Santos and Rufin 2010, Dator-Bercilla and al 2012).

As NGOs have become major players in the international development business and often employ well-educated and well-off people, it has become clear that they do not, as such, represent local low-income populations. Therefore *local populations* are included through community-based organizations (CBO). They work as the direct access to local people and as a source of trust (Rivera-Santos and al 2012). A CBO can also be the local presence of an international NGO. Widely generalizing the major difference between an NGO and an CBO is that the scale of NGOs is broader and more professional, looking deeper at different sides of one issue, whereas CBOs look at a wider number of issues but all in one location (Buxton and Prewitt 2003). Although it has to be noted that also the representativeness of CBOs has been doubted recently, as the members of CBOs not always include people from different ethnic, political, gender or religious groups of the community and the poorest are often the most excluded (de Wit and Berner 2009).

Local firms bring to partnership knowledge on local market characteristics – at least on the upper and midmarket - and often have functioning distribution networks in the area (Napier and Hoang 2011), whereas lower markets are often un- or underserved also by the local actors.

Research institutions are occasionally also present at BOP ventures as the academic interest towards the branch has been vast since Prahalad's opening of the discussion. They bring to partnerships multidisciplinary knowledge gained from research (Dator-Bercilla and al, 2012).

Choosing right partners

There is vast literature on partner selection in cross-sector collaboration, but I will focus on studies from BOP contexts. The most burning questions for BOP venture partnerships relate to goal alignment. To separate partnerships for profit and impact from philanthropy the partners must be able to share strategic goals (Ashman 2001).

There is always a risk included in a partnership. In business-NGO partnerships the risk for the partners is different. Businesses can often decide the amount of risk they take with a venture with an NGO. And often the risk is measured in money. For NGO's beneficiaries the arrival of a new business can change lives – to good or bad. Regarding brand images, according to Tully (2004)

NGOs face higher reputational risks than businesses which enjoy higher reputational benefits in a partnership relationship.

A lot less has been said about operation modes and cooperation capabilities in practice. Tubengen (2014) point out that as the literature is business and management driven the picture of NGOs might be shallow and experience on their different operation modes narrow. Even the thought of a malfunctioning NGO in the developing world can be strange.

In a rare study that does focus on partner selection, Gradl, Krämer and Amadigi (2010) analyze a case study, Casa Melhor in Brazil. In this case there was a construction company looking for NGO to co-operate with to provide furniture for BOP markets. The company had three different partners in three different regions, which made comparative analysis possible. Given that company's and NGO's goals are aligned, they found out that the qualities that determine the success of cooperation are linkages and capabilities. The role of capital was also studied, but in this case it did not make a difference. Linkages mean the connection that NGO has to outside actors and capabilities refer to NGO's established functional processes aiming at achieving objectives. They have even been able to list capabilities (project management, organizing groups, and training) and linkages (community relations, sales channel relations, government relations and public relations) that NGOs (should) have and companies (could) benefit from. Gradl, Krämer and Amadigi's model offers a tool for companies to evaluate and choose partners. Still these questions are hard to judge in forehand and the question remains, whether or not these are also the qualities an NGO should look for in companies that they choose to co-operate with.

Gradl, Krämer and Amadigi's case is very particular though. Networks may not be so important when a company is mainly looking for e.g. knowledge and product tailoring. Tulder and Kostwinder's model (2007) combine goals and resources and suggest that when partnering attention should be paid to individual drivers, competencies and resources (both material and non-material) in use. Naturally the drivers for partners from different backgrounds vary, but Tulder and Kostwinder emphasize that the drivers must be complementary, supporting together a functioning business ecosystem.

In turn, Muller and Tulder (2006) ask the potential partnership for instance the following questions:

- Is there a fit between our long-term vision of development, our understanding of our role in society, and a partnership strategy?
- What specific (organizational) capabilities do we possess that would make us better suited to a partnership strategy than our 'competitors'?
- Is there demand for, and general acceptance of, partnerships as a mechanism for sustainable development?

- Are there additional sources of funding aimed at organizations interested in partnership strategies (such as government subsidies)?
- Will our major stakeholders (donors, investors, employees) consider this to be inline with our mission and strategy?

I use these questions in the background in the discussion part of this thesis.

2.2.2 Throughput

Throughput in the model describes the dynamics, execution and implementation of a partnership. This depends on the number and nature of participants, the roles adopted by the participants, the arrangement and degree of internal dependencies chosen, which in turn is influenced by the position of participants as primary or secondary stakeholder in the project.

Partnership governance

After finding suitable partners and agreeing on common goals, it must be decided how to work together. Many researchers point to the fact that private companies, NGOs and public sector have fundamentally different structures and values and as the cooperation often takes place in an unfamiliar environment these differences can lead to mistrust and complexities (for instance Rondinelli and London 2003, Dahan and al 2009). Tulder and Pfisterer (2013) point out that it is useful to "rigorously discuss" the motivations and the objectives of all partners.

Dahan and al (2009) list four imperatives for the success of long-term corporate-NGO alliances. Firstly the partners should look for combinative capabilities across business activities. Directing their worlds to the companies they advise to take advantage of all activities and capabilities the NGO has and try to make use of a wide range of them for instance to seek new distribution channels and come up with novel marketing practices. Secondly, the partners should be able to build organizational fit, cultural compatibility and trust. These are as critical in company-NGO partnerships as they are in private business alliances. Thirdly, it should be the self-interest of business-NGO partnership to support the development of local business environment. And fourthly, both partners should understand the unique conditions of developing countries.

Also Reficco and Marquez (2012) have found four criteria for successfully building inclusive networks in BOP markets. Firstly, they write, inclusive networks should facilitate access to key inputs: access to capital for low income people, access to soft funds for companies and access to qualified labour. Secondly, it was found out that because of the lack of complementors, inclusive networks in BOP markets have to be able to take care of a wide scope of activities. In the cases researched the companies had become hubs of these networks, having to redefine the boundaries of their business and develop new skills. Thirdly the companies had to go beyond the transactional

model of business. They had to invest in the development of the alliance. Some of the companies involved even talked about "becoming business friends", meaning commitment to each partners long-term growth. Fourthly, it was important to bear in mind that despite being "business friends" the business had to be sound. All help to other partners needed to be viable investments, not donations.

It has also been discussed how BOP alliances should be governed: how to share responsibilities, how to guard resources and reward partners from successes. This has been seen challenging as the governance structures in NGOs, companies, BOP communities and public sector vary enormously. According to Reficco and Marquez's research the most important questions (for companies) are "How to ensure long-term commitments? Who gets to decide what?" These questions can be answered through horizontal or vertical governance structures. Horizontal structures support creating deep connections between partners and solving issues of mistrust. They also help build commitment through active participation. And in the end they help to reach tacit knowledge from the community involved. But their price is paid in cost, time and scale. And therefore, according to Reficco and Marquez (2012), when the trust is gained the horizontal governance structures might be replaced by more traditional vertical structures.

Then again, Ashman's (2001) comparative study on 13 cases of civil society-business-partnerships in three countries proposes that shared control of partnership decision-making is associated with successful collaboration. Ashman is one of the few researchers who use development impacts as the meter of a successful partnership and she quite exceptionally ends up recommending empowered civil society collaboration for NGOs instead of strategic partnerships with companies. Maybe the strong emphasis on development is one of the reasons to the differences between her and Reficco and Marquez.

Also Tulder and Phisterer (2013) argue that shared participation in decision-making in all levels – from bottom to board – is important as it linked to the commitment to the partnership and through it to the success of the venture.

Partner roles

In the BOP literature partners' roles are usually described through their responsibilities. The partners identified in section 2.1.1 have different tasks – that can also been called roles – in the cooperation process.

For instance Hietapuro (2011), who looks at the issue from the company perspective, found nine categories for these tasks in the literature review of her thesis that based a literature review. These categories were: co-developers, suppliers, distributors, complementors, customers, microfinance partners, brokers, funders and impact assessors.

De Boer and al (2009) look at the issue from the NGO's point of view. They present the term PONGO for partnership oriented NGO and name four possible roles, or combinations of the, for a PONGO in a partnership. These are:

- A *broker* performs an intermediary role between business partners in the North and business partners in the South in the establishment of the chain. Financing is not part of this role.
- A *donor / financier* bears some of the risk necessary to establish the chain. The local partner NGO in collaboration with the business partner(s) is implementing partnership projects financed by the Northern NGO. The intervention of the Northern NGO focuses mainly on auditing (and project cycle management activities) of the provided finances.
- A *technical assistant* invests at arm's length in capacity building of potential business partners or sub-contractors such as cooperatives. Assistance comes in the form of knowledge or other tangible resources related to know-how, skill development or capacity building that is provided without dedicating personnel on the ground in the South.
- A *technical expert* dedicates resources in the field to local economic development. In this instance the NGO provides knowledge in terms of the local environment and of possible stakeholders such as potential partners / competitors, communities, etc.

De Boer and al (2009) separate the different roles and tasks that northern and southern NGOs take in partnerships, where the southern NGO mainly takes care of the implementation and the northern NGO of the financing. This difference is also present in my study, but probably less than in many other projects as this case also included developing new operating models in Finland.

Also according to present understanding these roles in the production chain are rather light descriptions – relating more to nominal tasks than the interaction – on the complicated processes affecting new business (co-)creation at the bottom of the pyramid. Behind these tasks a number of factors and internal dynamics between the participating organizations and individuals contribute to the partnership and eventually to the success of the venture (Tulder and Phisterer, 2008).

Still it is evident that the role of a broker is central and vital to the partnership development. Both Hietapuro (2011) and Tulder and Phisterer (2008) describe brokers as the ones who promote understanding between the partners and facilitate cooperation. An NGO, a company or public sector can take this role. Ashman (2001) points out that the presence or domain of the broker doesn't seem to necessarily bring dominance to his/her organization. Ashman says that to achieve shared control the key seems to be that all parties value the expertise of the NGO.

Peterman (2013) argues that organizational roles defined this way are relatively predictable as they base on organizational resources, motives and relationships formed. Therefore he pays attention to how the roles are perceived and how these perceptions are (mis)aligned, and what are

the subsequent implications for access to and sharing knowledge. Based on these ideas and his data sample of US based companies, the Peterman found six interorganizational roles in an environmental alliance network. The roles were 1) integrator, 2) director, 3) sharer, 4) user, 5) outsider and 6) departed. The integrator comes closest to the other role typologies that have been presented: integrator's role is similar to the one of broker. It occupies the most central network position and participates actively. The director differs from integrator by its resources: it doesn't only have the technical and financial resources but also personnel and reputational assets. The sharer sees deficiencies in the network and addresses them by helping others whereas the user concentrates on addressing their internal resource deficits by taking advantage of other organizations. The outsider was unsuccessful at gaining a central position and has accepted a subordinate position in the network. Lack of organizational resources or lack of authority in the network maybe the reasons that lead to this. The departed left the network, because, in this study, they were experts who were not learning anything new. I will reflect these roles with my empirical data and describe the roles with stakeholder maps in the discussion part of this study.

Relations between partners

Stakeholder maps can be used to describe partners' relations with each other and the interaction between all participants. Later in this study I aim at deepening the understanding of partner roles by going beyond the nominal task of each partner by describing the interaction between the partners in Weconomy Start.

Calton and al (2013) describe the development of stakeholder mapping. Earlier company was placed in the centre of the analysis, surrounded by other players like employees, suppliers, communities and customers (Freeman and Phillips 2002). Now these standard stakeholder maps have been replaced by decentred stakeholder maps that have connections to and from each stakeholder to all others. A decentralized stakeholder map can describe BOP business stakeholders as equal partners in complex situations. According to the writers this allows better resolving the tensions between social and economic objectives. I will use maps like this to describe the connections and dynamics of the partners studied in the discussion part of this thesis.
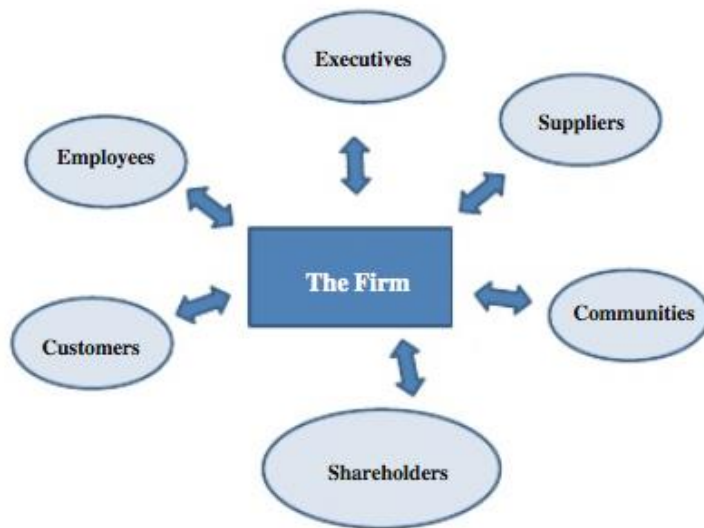
Picture 3, Standard stakeholder map (Freeman and Phillips 2002).
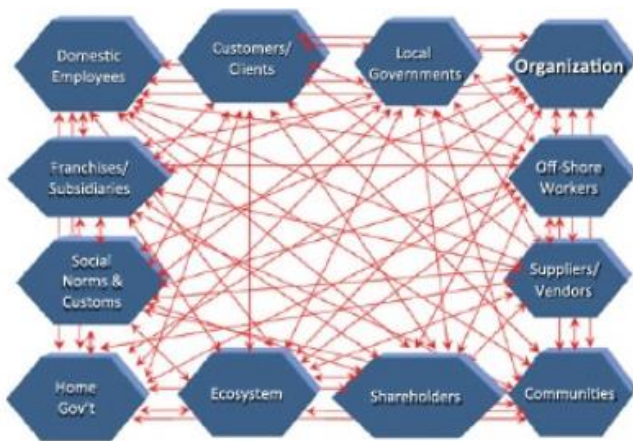
Picture 4, Decentred stakeholder map (Werhane 2008).

Peterman (2013) and Peterman and al (2014) used models similar to these stakeholder maps to define which roles each partner occupied. They evaluated the maps by applying a model originally presented by Linton Freeman (1979). First they looked at *degree centrality*, which means the number of links upon a node. Second, *betweenness centrality* that refers to the number of paths that one has to pass in the network to achieve a certain node. And third, *community embeddedness*, which measures how enmeshed individuals or organizations are in the network. I will use these to guide me in interpreting the roles that the partners studied have in relation to each other.

2.2.3 Output

Output describes what the partnership process results in. What are the goods and services produced, and have the goals of the participants changed as a result of the experiences gained

during the process. This is first measured against how well have the original goals of each participant actualized. Second criterion is to see how well the project goals have been fulfilled and what are the benefits for each participant. Finally, sustainability and scalability of the project are also to be evaluated (Tulder 2008).

Goal alignment

Different actors in BOP partnerships come from different backgrounds, and they are often structurally different and finally the goals and motivators of these organizations and individuals working in them are different. Watered down, companies are driven by profit-seeking, NGOs most often with social goals and public sector with their responsibilities towards tax payers. This is often common knowledge to all participants. Still this might lead to multifaceted use of resources while all participants aim at loading also each other's' resources towards their own goals.

Therefore for successful partnerships it is important to agree on every partners' own partnership goals and to be able to redefine and meter them during the process. The partners must share an overarching partnership goal that can be the means to achieve individual objectives of the partners (Tulder and Phisterer, 2008).

Kolk and al (2008) studied objectives and roles in business and partnerships for development. They looked at tripatriate partnerships including NGOs, companies and public sector or two of these three. Their study from the Netherlands emphases the fact that companies eagerly bring out that corporate interests should be leading in a partnership and cooperation must contribute to profitability. In the other hand public sector looks at the partnerships as long-term relationships with a more general aim.

Goal alignment can be a constant negotiation process that sometimes means that in order to achieve everyone's final goals, multiple, seemingly unrelated subprojects need to be created (Rivera-Santos and al 2012). For instance a water utility company AAA working with NGOs in Colombia to improve water supply also supported local sports teams to gain trust in the communities.

Commitment and exit

Successful partnership requires commitment and trust from all parties. Still in the beginning partners' knowledge on each other's' capabilities and goals is limited.

It is widely agreed in the literature that an exit strategy is a necessary part of partnership agreement. Exit should be possible when priorities change, partners' capabilities don't match any more or when the partnership has served the partners enough and the project has come to an end.

If there is an exit point, each partners' capabilities should be built during the process to assure sustainability for the mission (Tulder and Phisterer, 2008).

3   Case presentation: Weconomy Start

My study is a case study about a programme to create a platform for companies to engage in BOP markets. The programme is globally pioneering activity bringing together a wide range of partners looking for new ways to combine business and development in cocreation with low-income communities. The aim is to solve development problem profitably by combining business dynamics to some of the methods and lessons learned from decades of experience of development cooperation. By no means is this an easy task and developing the operation mode will be a constant process.

At the moment the programme runs for a set of companies for one year. My research period was the first half of the second operation year. Already many changes have been made to the programme to better suite the need of the companies and the low-income communities. The programme has also drawn attentions globally, and most likely other World Vision offices will take similar programmes into use in the coming years.

On its own www-page the programme is described as follows:

> "The programme takes Finnish companies to developing countries to solve social, economic and ecological challenges. Access to a four billion person market offers companies significant opportunities for international growth. Weconomy Start is targeted at Finnish companies, where they will develop product and service ideas suitable for poor areas in collaboration with the end users, the disadvantaged people. It's a familiar and concrete way for World Vision to work with companies in long-lasting cooperation. The aim of this partnership is that both the companies and the poor communities will benefit from it." (http://www.worldvision.fi/yrityksille/weconomy-start)

The programme markets itself at the web-pages by offering companies for instance a chance for developing and testing an innovative business idea in the target market, deep knowledge on India's and Sri Lanka's grass root level needs and the special characteristics of BOP business, contacts with local communities and officials, knowhow and skills to develop sustainable business models and a possibility to scale up a successful business idea globally.

3.1   Partner roles and responsibilities

Weconomy Start is a joint program that is produced by World Vision Finland in cooperation with Aalto University and national trade, internationalization and investment development organization in Finland, Finpro. The programme originated from World Vision Finland's aims at developing their

cooperation with private sector. Close ties between the lead of the organization and Aalto University BOP researchers led to the development of the Weconomy programme within a couple of years.

World Vision Finland is a part of a Christian humanitarian organization - World Vision - that works in nearly 100 countries tackling the causes of poverty and injustice by working with children, families, and their communities worldwide. This combination was created in order to collect knowledge and implementation skills from different areas. Roles and responsibilities for the organizing partners were originally planned as follows:

WV Finland: Overall project planning and coordination, linkage between different actors (WV Lanka and India, Aalto, Finpro, Companies). Facilitating the co-creation in Finland and cooperation between partners and participants.

WV Lanka and India: Providing information about the local ecosystem at community level: needs, aspirations and skills of the communities, challenges and opportunities of the operating environment. Contacts with local decision makers, entrepreneurs, potential partners etc. Facilitating the field trips and the co-creation process.

Aalto University / Aalto Global Impact: Writing a BOP guide for companies that are interested in doing business with impact in developing markets. Research and development of new innovation methods. Training on BOP and co-creation, facilitating kick-off and training in Finland.

Finpro: Business consulting and coaching for participating in internationalisation as well as sectoral expertise. Providing a comprehensive field network and information on local business environments.

Participating companies: Commitment to responsible business by 1) building and growing sustainable business that solves economical, ecological and/or social challenges, 2) and participating in the entire program from January 2013 to January 2014 according to contract.

(Presentation on Weconomy's content for participating companies, 2012)

3.2 From planning into action

Planning for the programme started in 2012 and the first round of the year-long programme was launched and second in the beginning of 2014. As an NGO-lead BOP business venture program this program is unique world-wide. The schedule with preparative workshops was built by World Vision Finland, Aalto University and Finpro. It included first orientation to the ideas of inclusive

business and bottom of the pyramid markets. The first field trip took place at an early stage in order to have eyes open for new ideas, needs and business opportunities. Business development took place after familiarizing with local conditions. A few months later the longer field trip, the co-creational trip, took place. After a three to four -week intensive field work business concepts were refined back in Finland with the help of Finpro consultants. The programme year ended with a promotional seminar that aimed at promoting both the programme and the companies' business.

Orientation → Observation Field Trip → New Business Development → Co-creation in the Target Area → Refining Business Concepts → Promotion seminar

Orientation	**Introducing participants, project team and BOP business**
	Weconomy Start programme and its expert network. The nature and opportunities of BOP markets. Determining the capacity of the company. World Vision operations and the culture of the target country.
	→ Common mind-set and understanding; Principles of BOP business and toolkit for the first field trip
Observation Field Trip	**Meetings and observation in the target location**
	Needs and opportunities in the target area and the operational logic of the BOP market. Developing an understanding of the economic, social and ecological situation. Identifying and brainstorming on business ideas. Meeting local communities, entrepreneurs, experts and officials.
	→ Basis for new business ideas: understanding of where new opportunities arise
New Business Development	**Sharing of observations & learning**
	Learning from BOP success cases. Refining your business ideas with experts, tools and concepts. Deepening your understanding of local culture, business environment and its challenges. Identifying business opportunities and partners.
	→ Readiness to co-create business models; preparation of company specific toolkit for the second field trip
Co-creation Field Trip	**Co-creation with the local ecosystem**
	Innovating and testing the business idea in co-creation with local community, WV and other local stakeholders. Support from experts and communities in finding local business partners and relevant networks.
	→ Initial business concept co-created
Refining Business Concepts	**Sharing of new business concepts and drafting plans**
	Preparing company-specific business concepts together with coaches and experts. Drafting implementation plans.
	→ Feedback & ideas to company specific implementation plan
Promotion Seminar	**Introductions of new businesses and sharing of business experiences at BOP**
	Promoting new businesses and learning from BOP business. Valuable information, stories from those who have participated in the programme and sharing innovative ideas.
	→ Publicity and new ideas

Picture 5: Weconomy Start schedule for participating companies.

http://www.worldvision.fi/yrityksille/weconomy-start1/program-2014

Engaging in co-creation in low-income communities has been a central idea in the programme. By co-creation the programme means, according to its webpage "that companies not only observe and interview potential end-users, but also invite people to participate in innovation. The aim is to combine local people's knowledge of their needs and the environment with the technological and business knowledge of the company." During the orientation companies are prepared for this, as cocreation, and inclusive business as a result, are the motivators for World Vision to open their networks for companies' use.

During the first year the programme had a solid timetable of fixed workshops organized for all participants together. Also the two field trips mainly took place at the same time and the participants shared a large part of the programme. During the second round there were only two companies participating and they were interested in operating in different countries with very different business ideas. Also the other wanted to hurry whereas the other used several months to choose the locations for its operations. Therefore the organizing partners saw little synergies between these two companies and ended up having tailor-made programmes separately for both participating companies, Fortum and Trawise. During my research period the two participating companies did not meet or communicate.

3.3 Partner selection process at Weconomy Start

As Weconomy Start is a rather new and unknown programme, World Vision Finland has to actively seek participating companies to the programme. They look for companies whose business can be aligned with World Vision's goals, measured mainly by child well-being. As WV's own tools to improve children's lives are diverse (measured by social, economic and health indicators) many companies can fulfil these objectives by for instance offering employment for the parents.

WV Finland looks for these companies by listing potential partners and contacting them directly. They organize events and participate in seminars and events around the Weconomy theme and present the programme there. WV also informs their networks and general public about the programme by publishing press releases, appearing on email newsletters, printing brochures and occasionally appearing on their own customer magazine. A large part of the recruiting work is the Weconomy programme director's one-to-one discussions with potential partners trying to find common ground and also motivating companies to take the decision to participate.

During my research period, in the second round of the programme, preliminary interviews for companies considering participation were taken into use. The goal of these interviews was twofold: to gain information on the capabilities and resources of the companies and to further convince them to participate in the programme. After identifying 6-8 companies that were seriously considering participation in the programme, World Vision and Aalto invited them to an interview. These interviews took place in the first months of 2014. At the interview sessions companies' goals were discussed and it was also mentioned that WV wanted to complete a due diligence process with companies to minimize risks related to working with the company in question. Companies were asked questions about the resources they had available for the programme and their experience from working in the developing world. Also the term co-creation was introduced. The questions are attached (attachment 3).

As World Vision is an organization aiming at child well-being it was clear that no participating company could have issues with child abuse. Before the field trip the participants' criminal records were checked.

Despite these efforts finding companies to participate has not been easy. On first year Weconomy had five (later only four) participating companies: two (later one) in India and three in Sri Lanka. On my research year there were two participating companies; Fortum and Trawise, of which only Trawise completed a field trip during the first half of the year.

3.4 Fortum

Fortum Plc is a Finnish energy company employing 8,800 people and sales totalling EUR 6.1 billion (2013). Fortum states that its purpose is to create energy that improves life for present and future generations. The operations focus on the Nordic and Baltic countries, Russia and Poland, but the company has a newly established office in Delhi. Fortum operates a 5 MW solar power plant in Rajasthan to gain experiences in different solar technologies and operating in the Indian power market. Still, they state that

> *"Fortum's immediate priority is on*
> *combined heat and power (CHP) for industrial supply of power and steam.*
> *Furthermore, Fortum is interested to assess growth opportunities, also together with*
> *local partners, in other forms of sustainable energy production and customer*
> *solutions."* (http://www.fortum.com/countries/in/fortum-in-india/activities/pages/default.aspx, retrieved Dec 3rd, 2014)

This is what Fortum's participation to Weconomy start also relates to. As a part of the programme Fortum wants to create a way to collect biomass to be used at bio power plants in India. The aim is to employ people in low-income communities to collect and sell the biomass, but World Vision's expertise is needed to get access to communities and to create there a sustainable new livelihood. It is also planned to replace the use of biomass for cooking at homes by for instance solar cookers. Due to more enhanced technologies this would result in better energy as well as less small particles in the air causing lung diseases. This is a good example of a radical change in daily lives and livelihoods where a NGO partner's experience can help to bring up the diverse consequences to the community.

3.5 Trawise

Trawise is a Finnish start-up that plans to develop services related to community development and tourism. At their webpage they describe it as "complete service packages to encourage, facilitate and empower sustainable tourism development in emerging tourist destinations. Trawise is specialized in Intellectual Property based development and management and financial services for tourism industry." (http://www.trawise.fi/html/services.html)

Trawise is one of three Wise companies. Operating in the field of software and television technologies, two other companies already have established business. Trawise joined Weconomy Start after a friend's recommendation. In Weconomy Start Trawise looks for access to communities and their needs through World Vision. They plan to join some of their operations with World Vision's existing projects and WV organized groups already functioning in the communities. A part of the business is through outside financiers to remove the risk from minor handicraft producers as for instance operating as a wholesaler. The business model has a strong social aspect with a part of the revenues being constantly channelled to community development projects, which in turn again help to develop the community into a more appealing tourist destination. The products and services will be marketed under the brand name Salute the World. The business model is a result of the founder's decade-long development work that he told has been done in cooperation with Nokia and World Heritage Centre.

4 Data and methods

In this section I justify the choice of Weconomy Start programme to be studied as a case study. I will also describe my research methodology and give reasons to choosing this approach. I will also present my data in tables.

4.1 Case selection

Weconomy Start was chosen to be studied, as it is a globally unique programme where an NGO leads a business venture development programme aiming at poverty alleviation and business benefits at the bottom of the pyramid. The programme includes a wide variety of partners that were all designed to bring in their knowledge on BoP markets, business development and cocreation. The programme is also gaining reputation in the Finnish business world as in 2014 World Vision was invited to present the programme in Slush, one of the leading start-up events in the world. Also a number of World Vision offices around the world have shown interest in developing similar programmes and a web based learning tool for this is being built during the autumn of 2014.

4.2 Methods

My research method was a hybrid of action research and participatory observation. I entered the programme during its second year. Therefore I was in no position to contribute to the structures of the programme. Still, I participated actively to both planning and executing of the programme during the spring of 2014. This somewhat fulfils the criteria of action research particularly with the planning and executing of workshops (attachment 1) and preparatory interviews (attachment 3). During the field trip I conducted participatory observation as the trip (attachment 2) was almost entirely planned by World Vision Sri Lanka and World Vision Finland and Trawise played the major roles at all meetings.

4.2.1 Action research

My research method has elements of action research. Simply put action research implies "a process of research where the purpose of the research is not only to study the existing reality but to engage in an effort to transform it. In this model, research assumes a catalytic role and

produces both a new dynamic and concrete, studiable changes in the reality that can then be actively inducted into the process of knowledge creation. A requirement of action research is that the separation between "researcher and researchee" is dissolved – so as to avoid the weakness of conventional methods which view "affected persons and groups" as being passive and incapable of analysing their own situation and identifying solutions to their own problems" (Mukherjee, 2006).

The choice of method was mainly due to the fact that since the beginning of Weconomy Start this had been Aalto University approach. This way Aalto's contribution to the process was seen beneficial for all participants. As Aalto researchers collected material for their studies, they could simultaneously provide their knowledge on inclusive business to the programme's use to help in planning and executing the programme.

Nelson (2013) describes action research as a four-cycle process that is participatory in nature. The first cycle may become a continuing, or iterative, spiral of cycles which recur until the action researcher has achieved a satisfactory outcome.

1. Planning: In this phase the researcher identifies a problem and develops a plan of action in order to bring about improvements in a specific area of the research context.

2. Action: The researcher carries out deliberate interventions and questions the assumptions about the current situation and plans new and alternative ways of doing things.

3. Observation: The researcher observes systematically the effects of the action and documents the context, actions and opinions of those involved.

4. Reflection: The researcher reflects on, evaluates and describes the effects of the action in order to make sense of what has happened and to understand the issue explored more clearly. Further cycles of AR may be needed (adapted from Nelson 2013).

The same cycles took place not only in my own study, but also in relation to other Aalto researchers working at Weconomy Start. My study was built upon the planning and action work as well as observations and reflections done by a professor, doctoral student and a master student. This way the action research project has truly been cyclical passing on from a researcher to another.

4.2.2 Participant observation

My study also has elements from participant observation. According to Saunders (2009) it is a method in which the researcher participates in the lives and activities of those whom they are studying. Saunders describes participatory observation in relation to the amount of the researcher taking part in activity and whether the researcher's identity is revealed or concealed. During the

entire study my identity a researcher was revealed. What changed was the role as an observer and active participant.
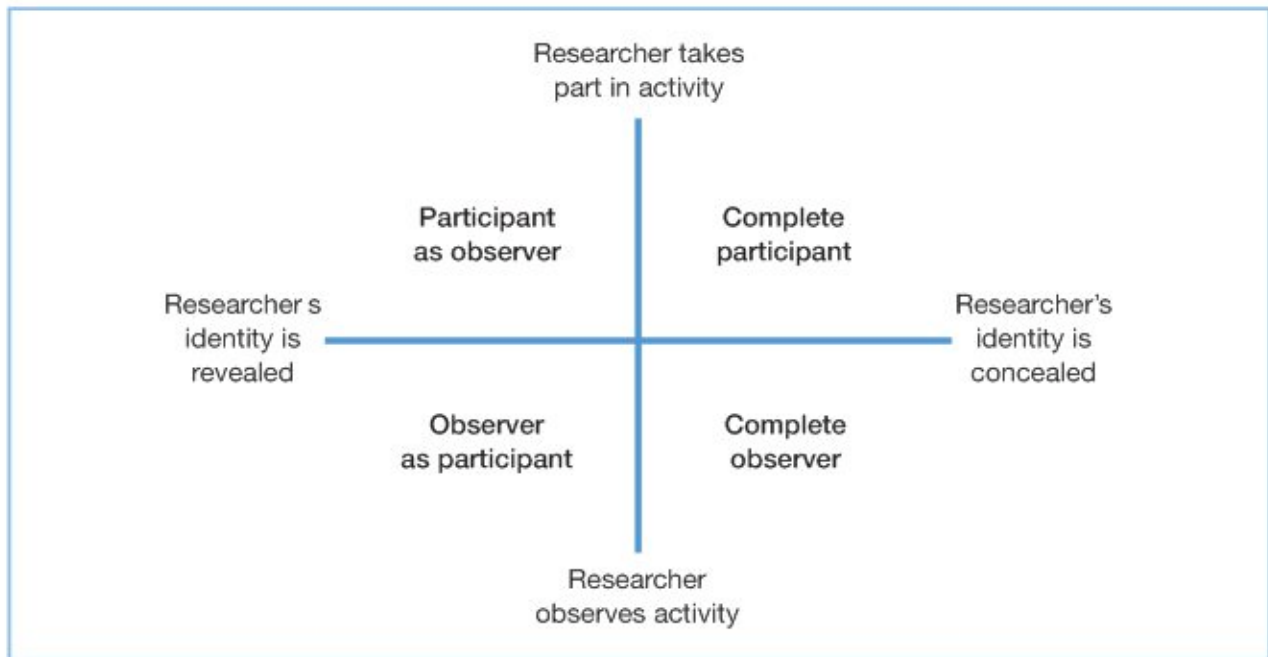
Picture 6, Saunders 2009

Saunders (2009) describes list the pros and cons of these roles. Observer as participant presents the advantage of researcher being able to focus on the researcher role. For example, being constantly able to make notes on insights as they occur. In turn, this means losing the emotional involvement: really knowing what it feels like to be on the receiving end of the experience. This is the role that I had at the most of the meetings during the field trip, especially when meeting government officials and possible funders.

At the meetings in rural villages I has a more active role. In relation to our own team it was participant as observer. Saunders (2009) writes that in this case the researcher is particularly interested to gain the trust of the group, which was true in my case as I aimed at justifying my presence by bringing up useful themes. According to Saunders this is also the main advantage of this approach: Because his identity as researcher was clear he could ask questions of his subjects to enhance his understanding. This also leads to other advantage; these questions lead the key informants to become likely to adopt a perspective of analytic reflection on the processes in which they are involved. The most important themes rose from my data after many rounds of discussions with other participants and analysing the data. All the themes that rose from my data were also noted in previous literature.

4.3 Reliability of the study and limitations

There was plenty of first hand data for a master's thesis. The research questions changed during the research period, which, of course, changed the focus of attention on the way. Action research as a research method turned me, as a researcher, close to World Vision staff as all work shops were planned together. This naturally turned me into insider at some occasions and might have harmed objectivity. In the other hand it allowed me to build a very close and confidential relationship with especially the Weconomy Start project manager, who often called Aalto researchers "my team". A number of long discussions about the programme were conducted at lunch breaks and during the field trip. These discussions surely deepened my understanding of the programme. Which again increased and splintered the data used for my analysis. This is why just a small fraction of the data is presented in the tables.

Saunders (2009) warns participant observers to avoid the trap of mere storytelling and to develop a theory. I have tried to avoid this by using Tulder's framework to structure my analysis. However, as my data covers only the first months of a partnership, the framework could not be utilized completely.

Using participatory observation always produces the risk for observer bias. Becoming a team member of the Weconomy programme naturally made me hope for success for the programme. This may have played a role in the questions and decisions I made. Also close teamwork with World Vision Finland made me look at the things more from their perspective that for instance of the companies'. This came up in the very end of my study in a concluding conversation with a Trawise representative.

Also my time frame limits the analysis. I only observed the process for nine months. This was just the start for cooperation between Weconomy Start and two new companies. It is widely agreed that BOP business venture development is time consuming, and so is building trust between strategic partners. Therefore I can only give insights to the formation of partner roles. Data

My research took place during the second operation year of the programme from January 2014 until September 2014. During my research the programme basics were built, but the structure was under constant development. Some companies were considering participating, two decided to start with the programme: Trawise participated actively and Fortum started their planning phase.

My primary data includes notes and/or records from nearly all meetings between these two companies and World Vision Finland during the spring. The data also includes two types of interviews. First there were five preliminary interviews with companies considering participating to the programme. These interviews were structured and conducted with World Vision Finland staff (attachment 3). Secondly I had numerous unstructured interviews and conversations with World

Vision and Aalto staff during my research period. I participated to a 12-day field trip to Sri Lanka in May 2014. I also participated to World Vision's global Inclusive business conference that took place in September 2014 in Maintal, Germany. Notes from there are included in the study. Also written documentation on the programme, Weconomy Start brochures and www-pages as well as approximately 200 emails concerning the planning of the programme served as a source of data. The data includes approximately 20 hours of recorded interviews and workshops with World Vision Finland representatives, participating companies and Aalto University researchers. In some of the workshops there were also representatives from World Vision Sri Lanka, World Vision India and / or Finpro. There are also about 30 pages of transcribed notes taken from these interviews and meetings as well as from one seminar organized by World Vision in January 2014 and from several one to one discussions with World Vision Finland and Sri Lanka staff.

But as these partnerships with Fortum and Trawise are both unique, drawing conclusions based just on them makes no justice to the programme. Therefore I decided to support my study with secondary information on the previous year (2013) that I collected from an evaluation report of the programme as well as from interviews with the project manager and the doctoral student also studying Weconomy programme. This secondary information is used to make comparisons between the two years of operation and to describe the development that has taken place in the programme.

All data was read carefully with the research questions in mind. It was tabled as presented in the following sections. Also all comments about relations, whether implicit or explicit, were marked. That said the tables only contain a small fraction of information collected during the nine-month study period. To support the tables I use descriptive quotes in the findings section. The descriptiveness of these quotes has been double-checked with other participants of the process to avoid misinterpretations and bias. For the sake of triangulation the stakeholder maps created were confirmed by discussing them together with World Vision Finland and Aalto university representatives.

4.4 Data tables

The data presented in the following tables was chosen to answer my research questions by the means I found from the literature. In both tables resources, capabilities and goals play central roles.

In table 1, Candidates 2014, I present the rough business ideas that Weconomy Start 2014 candidates presented to World Vision. I also list the capabilities, resources and goals that they

indicated to have related to this project. The data is mainly drawn from the preliminary interviews. The names of the candidate companies that decided not to participate during my research period have been changed as well as some details of their business ideas to ensure anonymity.

In the table 2, Partners 2014, I add the links to other partners, needs from them and support to them. All these themes are closely connected to findings in previous studies (e. g. Gradl and al 2010, Peterman 2013). My goal was to collect together the factors contributing to the dynamics of Weconomy Start 2014. In the left column I have listed all participants. In the following columns I present themes that stood out in the literature and in my data as the most important components contributing to the success of the partnership.

First of all, there is the goal. Without a goal that all partners can accept and create a common vision around the partnership has no reason to exist. The goals are viewed in more detail in next section.

Also the risks involved seemed to explain some of the choices that partners made in relation to sharing information with other partners and committing to the partnership. In the other hand local WV organizations took high risks without asking questions.

Capabilities and resources stood out as a defining component for partner roles and success of the partnership in both literature and my empirical data.

Support for others' goals is included in the themes to describe the commitment to the programme and common goals.

Connections to the other participants describe the centrality of the partner in the programme. The roles are often defined by the connections (e. g. Peterman 2013, Peterman and al 2014) and they also describe whether others need the partner or the partner need others more for each organization to reach its goals.

4.4.1 Candidates 2014

Company name	Participation	Description of BOP business idea	Benefit for low-income community	Co-creational part of the project	Capabilities indicated	Resources indicated	Target at Weconomy Start	Other issues
Fortum	2014	Collecting biomass in rural India to produce bioenergy.	Creation of a new livelihood, bringing in more efficient and clean ways to produce energy.	How to organize the collection? How could energy use in the community be organized?	Good knowledge on the industry and needs for the end product locally. Lack of experience on working with poor Indian communities.	One committed employee in India, two contact persons in Finland. All working with this as a smallish side project. Financial resources not a problem in this scale.	Finding a way to responsibly organize the collection of biomass at the community level. Goodwill towards communities.	No hurry, as energy investments take time. Had solid links to Aalto before joining the programme.
Trawise	2014	Introducing a new way to combine tourism and development.	New livelihoods through including low-income communities in tourism through local hotels, restaurants and handicraft development.	Hotel and handicraft development locally.	Experience from tourism development, and business development. No experience on Sri Lanka or grassroot work in a developing country.	One full time employee with entrepreneurial mind located in Finland. Solid financing for participation, for execution large outside investors needed.	Connections to communities, excellence in development projects and organizing CBOs, credibility towards local leaders.	Similar project ongoing in Vietnam without an NGO partner. The contact to WV Finland was created when Trawise presented their business idea at a seminar and WV for interested.
Dent	Maybe later	Introducing low cost tooth clinics. New dental innovations for low-income markets.	Tooth care becoming available for the mid-BOP	Finding out a way to share knowledge on dental health.	Previous experience from business models in Indian health sector.	Lack of human resources, financial resources not a problem at this scale.	Find a network for dental care in India, raise awareness of dental care. Entering new markets, "saving the world".	Timing, allocating resources.
Chant	Maybe later	Ergonomic solutions for schools. Also open to new ideas that	Better health through better ergonomy.	Using local handicraft skills?	Rapid innovation skills. Solid experience on international sales.	Lack of human resources, financial resources not a problem at this scale.	Finding new markets in Africa.	Challenge with the fixed programme.

		appear on the way.						
Nets	Maybe later	Low cost data networks for distant and conflict areas.	Low cost access to internet.	Not specified.	Experience from international business in harsh conditions.	Lack of financial resources.	Get introduced to local officials, gain credibility.	Allocating financial and human resources.

Table 1, Weconomy Start candidates 2014

4.4.2 Partners 2014

Partner name	Main goals and priorities	Main risks	Capabilities	Resources	What they needed from Weconomy?	How did they support others' goals?	What kind of connections to other partners they had during their participation?
World Vision Finland	Find new ways to achieve development impact; create a world-wide new operation model for partnerships	The opportunity cost for the money and time used. Reputation risk especially in the eyes of financiers. Responsibility for companies' actions as a part of the programme.	Capable of linking Finnish companies to the field organizations in India and Sri Lanka.	One full time project manager supported by innovation director and specialists in the organization. External funding for the development of the programme for two years.	Development impact, partners to create with and implement, fees from companies to fund the programme development and action within it	Organizing the programme on practical level. Offering information openly for companies and for Aalto. Financial support for Sri Lankan and Indian offices. Opening their networks, acting as hosts.	Strong communication with all, except Finpro
World Vision Sri Lanka	Creating a new source of funding impact at local level, creating new model for company	Losing trust in the ADPs, losing financiers' trust.	Strong knowledge on local needs and conditions. Already had a programme for cooperating with private sector.	One full time Weconomy employee, financed by WV Finland.	Management and organizational skills, funding	Opening their networks, providing information.	Frequent skype calls and meetings with WV Finland and later also with Trawise

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	cooperation.						
Koralaipattu ADP	Gain more resources to help local communities	Creating false expectations in the low-income communities. Baring the risk for companies' actions at the grass root level.	Strong knowledge on local needs and conditions. Solid experience of working with low-income communities.	Everything done along with other tasks.	Development impact, resources, funding.	Opening their networks, organizing meetings, acting as hosts.	Skype calls with WV Finland and Sri Lanka
Local populations in Koralai Pattu, CBOs	Make or gain more money for living.	Waste of time, false hopes.	Organizing groups around different themes, for instance handicrafts and farming.	Time and workforce. Best knowledge on local conditions and needs.	Never asked.	Participating to meetings they were invited, presenting their homes and communities to Weconomy partners, showing their skills and interest to contribute further.	Planning made through Koralai Pattu ADP staff. Meeting with other partners ceremonial.
World Vision India	Creating impact at local level, creating new model for company cooperation.	Creating false hopes in communities.	Strong knowledge on local needs and conditions.	One full time Weconomy employee, financed by WV Finland.	Management and organizational skills, funding	Helping at choosing the right community.	Varying communication with World Vision Finland. A few meetings with Fortum India representatives.
Fortum	Test a new business model	Losing time for a partnership that isn't useful.	As only tentative work was done in India the capabilities indicated were not confirmed in practice.	Changes in the staff in the Indian office. Strong financial background.	Expertise on BOP communities	Aligned business goals with WV. Providing funding for WV also beyond the programme. Sharing some information with Aalto.	Skype calls and meetings with WV Finland and India
Trawise	Create a new business model	Losing time and money for a partnership that isn't useful. As the project very much in the core of Trawise's business	Experience from starting similar business in Vietnam. Strong background in organizing	Two full time employees with entrepreneurial minds located in Finland. Solid financing for	Expertise on BOP markets and communities, relations to local leaders and people. Practical	Business goals are very much aligned with WV's goals. Business can be built in WV's development	Calls, meetings and a field trip with Aalto, WV Finland and Sri Lanka, diminishing links to Aalto as the

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		this was a vital risk and doesn't compare to Fortum's. Risks caused by working with an NGO in a country that is hostile towards NGOs.	international business and sales. Wide perspective on economic development.	participation, outside investors not indicated during the research period.	arrangements onsite.	programmes. Sharing some information with Aalto.	programme got further.
Aalto University	Gain and test knowledge from BOP markets to serve the inclusive business community.	No major risks.	Theoretical knowledge on BOP markets. Capability to share that information.	One phd student, one master's student and professor giving background support.	Access to information. Empirical material for research papers.	Strong participation to programme planning at the beginning. Supporting at the programme planning and workshop realisation.	Strong cooperation with WV Finland, meetings with both companies, field trip to Sri Lanka where discussion with all Sri Lankan partners.
Finpro	Selling their services. Gaining new knowledge.	No major risks.	Studies made on the markets, local contact people in India. None of these were utilized by other partners.	A consultant appointed as a contact person. No work time allocated to the project.	Customers.	Giving a few comments at workshops.	Some email contacts with WV Finland, participation to a few meetings

Table 2, Weconomy Start partners 2014

5   Findings and analysis

In this section of the study I analyze the core components of strategic partnership development: partner selection, role development, and the goals and exposure of each partner.

5.1   Partner selection

At the first stage notes from Weconomy Start launch 2014 seminar and all preliminary interviews (conducted in February and March 2014), were analysed with my subquestion in mind: What are the characteristics of a company that starts developing its business with an NGO?

Weconomy Start launch seminar took place in a hotel in central Helsinki in January. It took two hours and the programme consisted of an opening speech by the director of World Vision Finland, speech by an Aalto professor and panel discussion on the experiences of Weconomy Start 2013 participants. The event was organized to gain publicity to the programme, its participants and to attract new companies to participate. Only one of the companies had reached concrete results by that time and the rest were reluctant to describe their business in detail. From the audience some critical voices were raised about the scale of Weconomy operations. Still, partly based on the event, Nets got interested in joining the programme. The following preliminary interviews were conducted with companies that had expressed to be interested in participating to Weconomy programme. Aalto researchers and WV Finland staff conducted these five hour-long interviews in Finnish, at World Vision Finland's premises. Companies were asked questions about their business idea and how it would include poor people. Also their needs from Weconomy Start programme and motivations and resources for participation were discussed. During the discussion also other themes came up. For instance the fact that the programme had a 20.000 euros participation fee could be a major hindrance for start-up companies to join.

It was clear that during these interviews the pressure to get companies joining the programme was strong. There were no signed contracts at all for the ongoing year and the continuation of the programme was partly dependent on getting the participation fees collected. Also the researchers had high hopes for getting companies in – no programme, no research results. Therefore, although questions about legal processes were asked, it was not easy for the programme organizers to set demands for the companies at this point. They were simply needed too urgently.

World Vision offices in India and Sri Lanka were not actively involved in the selection of companies. Of course World Vision Finland has knowledge on the local needs through decades-

long development cooperation in the areas in question. Still it is interesting to look for instance at Dent's case. World Vision India's representative brought up at an early stage that dental care is not valued in India. This had no effect on World Vision Finland continuing the process with Dent and the theme was not even discussed in more detail. The pressure to include more companies was strong. But also, not always the representatives of World Vision's local offices are the ones who can judge what the real needs of people in low-income communities are as sometimes they are as distant from poverty as their Finnish counterparts. Still continuing the process with this company without further hearing opinions from Indian office strengthened the image of World Vision Finland being in the lead compared to the Indian office.

Two of the companies that were originally interested in participating to the programme decided to join in 2014. Three other companies that participated to preliminary interviews all showed interest, but decided at least to postpone their involvement. Interestingly all companies except Fortum linked the Weconomy programme straight to their core business. I will next present the reasons they indicated to Aalto and World Vision staff for participating or not participating.

The theme that stood out at the preliminary interviews was resources: financial and human. If these both existed, the company joined the programme. For Trawise this programme linked directly to their core business – it was the business. They had sufficient money to carry out the operations, there was a lead person for the project and the company lead was very committed; to the extent that the CEO decided to participate to the first field trip and most of the workshops. For Fortum the participation to Weconomy Start was a tiny fraction of their business: a side effort of a side effort. But neither did the participation fee play a role in their business. The question was more about allocation of time and priorities. Still, it seemed that the company had committed individuals, who saw the effort important, although not urgent leading to a slow start. For Nets the venture would have been a start in a new business area. The company was at starting phase with tight finance and busy employers. The timing was not right for them, although clear matches in goals could be seen. Dent wanted to postpone its participation, as the beginning of the year seemed too full of activities in the home markets. However they saw a benefit in cooperation with World Vision and Weconomy programme. For Chant the programme was introduced as it was in 2013 – a uniform model for all participants with fixed field trips. The reason why they didn't join was the length of the field trips. They said that they had no resources to stay such a long time at the destination as their way of doing business was more spontaneous: an idea leads to immediate action. Additionally their main interest was to do business in Africa, where Weconomy did not operate in 2014.

Naturally the existence of these resources is also a matter of prioritising. All of the companies interviewed have resources, but they decided to direct them to other projects. For some reasons other projects seemed more tempting to them at this point. When introducing the programme

World Vision and Aalto representatives were open about the slow return on investment in BOP business ventures and strongly emphasized the need to spend long periods of time in the target area.

As I played an insider role as an action researcher, the more complicated reasons, maybe related to match with the NGO or credibility of the programme itself, did not easily come up in interviews. Also, as the meeting was called an interview, not for instance a meeting or discussion, and WV and Aalto representatives were prepared with a question list, the setting did not support looking for and building shared solutions. With one potential partner asking questions, it was left for companies to answer. This did not allow open discussion between the company, World Vision and university and therefore potentially valuable information and new solutions were missed. The participants of 2013 expressed some concerns related to building BOP business in Weconomy Start programme at the closing event:

> *"We also got to test NGO collaboration. … Keep in mind that BOP-business development is a long road… In the long run they [people in low-income communities] could have a role."*

> *"We have gained knowledge and collaboration. But not an efficient way to generate exports."*

It should also be noted that when the event and the interviews were organized the programme was under a radical change, which was not completely seen even by the organizers. The operation model from year 2013 was presented to the candidates even though problems with flexibility and tailoring were known. But the fact that these changes were to take place already in 2014 was not clear at this point.

5.2 Unfolding partner roles

The second round of my analysis concentrated on the partners that actually participated in Weconomy Start 2014: Fortum and Trawise. This data was reviewed with the main research question in mind: How do partner roles unfold in an NGO-led BOP venture development programme? I looked for connections that each partner had to others, what they wanted to obtain from different partners and what were they willing to give to others and under what kind of conditions.

5.2.1 Workshops

During spring 2014 altogether two workshops were held with Trawise and two with Fortum. The field trip to Sri Lanka was conducted with Trawise in April-May 2014.

Trawise

As the Trawise wanted to get started quickly, the first workshop concentrated on getting ready for the field trip. Also preliminary thoughts on the tourism sector in Sri Lanka were shared. The meeting was organized in WV's premises with WV and Aalto staff. Sri Lankan staff participated through webex. Local staff in eastern Sri Lanka presented a detailed programme for Trawise's field trip.

Second workshop included a Meeting with Weconomy Start partners and discussing Trawise's business idea. Several World Vision's experts from Finnish and Sri Lankan offices (through webex) participated. The meeting aimed at answering the questions: What is the structure of World Vision locally and globally and what's in this structure for Trawise? What do WV offices work on in Eastern Sri Lanka? What does Aalto University bring to this partnership? How do we each see co-creation, bottom of the pyramid (BOP), poverty and inclusive business? Also lessons learnt from business at the base of the pyramid were presented trying to find examples of similar projects from the literature. This meeting was led by Aalto researchers. Although being happy about the workshop right after it, the content of it was later on strongly criticized. As they wanted to get hands on work, reviews of academic research in the BOP field seemed unnecessarily distant to their business. A Trawise representative expressed his aversion to the use of the term co-creation as in his opinion all these things have been done for years. For instance, he saw his previous work with Nokia and World Heritage Centre as a model of cocreation. Now the use of academic terms was to turn simple things complicated:

> *"You shouldn't think of this through terms. This is trivial"*

The worry about research disturbing business was present from the beginning and no common goal with Aalto was seen and again – it was not actively sought from Aalto's side either. Instead of attempting to support Trawise's Weconomy activities with all their academic and professional capabilities, Aalto researchers sticked to the general academic contribution agreed with World Vision in the programme plan and kept their own research agenda at the top of mind. Trawise representative asked for concrete benefits for his current project from the academic contribution too:

> *"You know, research is not our goal. We shouldn't be doing analysis by paralysis."*

Fortum

Fortum's first workshop was held in World Vision's premises with WV staff, Aalto researchers, two people from Fortum's Finnish office and one from the Indian office. First of all, WV and Weconomy were introduced with a short look into co-creation basics. Then Fortum presented their business idea and its strengths and threads were discussed. Aalto researchers gave examples of BOP case studies but due to lack of time a deeper discussion was postponed to the next session. A clear common goal and respect for World Vision's and Aalto's expertise was seen from the beginning. Fortum's representatives valued review of academic research as they were still distant from action and wanted to support their planning with background information and experiences from other companies. They stated at the first meeting:

> *"There is no easy way to prevent child labour [in a project like this]. We need World Vision to help us create a strategy for this."*

> *"We should learn from others. It is a good idea to include a workshop [organized by Aalto] to learn from other companies' cases in the field."*

Second workshop was held at Fortum's premises. It had participants from Fortum Finland, Aalto University, Finpro, World Vision Finland, and through webex also Fortum India as well as World Vision India representatives. As Fortum's representatives asked for, the focus was on case studies. Aalto researchers had organized a specialist on each case study to give a 15-minute presentation with emphasis on themes that were connected to Fortum's business case. The meeting also included a discussion on the way forward. Finpro mentioned about their study on biomass in India. The selection of Fortum's target area was discussed widely, but the decision was left to wait for more information. Finpro's participation was controversial. They were present – but as they were not paid, they came unprepared. They also said to have knowledge on biomass markets in India – but were not allowed to share it.

5.2.2 Trawise's field trip to Sri Lanka

The 12-day field trip to Sri Lanka took place in April-May 2014. The programme is attached (2). The participants were CEO and project manager from Trawise, Weconomy Start project manager from World Vision, and me as an Aalto University representative. Once in Sri Lanka the local project manager from Colombo office joined us and in Eastern province the local area development programme (ADP) staff organized and contributed to all the meetings. The programme was built to cover three themes: WV's work, tourism development and local tourism basis in Eastern province. Three areas were visited: Kalpitiya in western Sri Lanka, Batticaloa district in Eastern province and finally the capital, Colombo.

The programme during the trip included visits to WV's developmental projects like schools, children's clubs, home gardens and women's handicraft groups. In Eastern province local tourism

officials and tourism development grantee were met. A group meeting with local hotel owners was organized and their challenges were discussed. Some of the meetings originated from Trawise's ideas, but most of them were 100 per cent organized by the local ADP. In Colombo National Tourism Board, Vision Fund, and US Aid were met. As the meetings were organized by WV they also took the role of a host during the meetings. All of the meetings started with an introduction by either local ADP representative or World Vision Finland's representative. After that Trawise presented their business idea. Either ADP staff of WV Sri Lanka's representative had briefed all the parties met in forehand. At local communities people presented their handicrafts and wished to achieve a larger market for their products through Trawise.

Local ADP staff knew the people and their close relations showed when meeting people in low-income communities but also they brought credibility when meeting government officials. For instance this showed with a meeting with a district leader. After having been introduced by the local WV representative only a short introduction from Trawise was needed to convince him:

> "We are open in our heart. We give you maximum support. We are expecting your intervention… I also want to thank your team. We have a good relation with him [local WV employee]."

Still the expectations of future financial support were present also at the meetings with officials:

> "We don't have financiers… You have to give us some financial support. We are ready to support your organization."

When meeting Eastern province tourism development board Trawise representative brought this role up himself:

> "Our job is to provide you with the resources so that you can operate locally… This is why we have a network in Europe. You have a good future in front of you. Absolutely we want to explore how we can provide the assets for you and how we can co-operate."

When visiting low-income communities and women's groups no doubt of any kind was showed to Trawise representatives. All groups welcomed the guests, some with ceremonies. There was a general expectation, or hope, of positive things to come with this company. Positive things meaning buyers for their handicrafts, training that supports improvements in products and service quality, more customers for small businesses. Almost all communication, despite greetings, with local populations happened through ADP staff. The business idea was presented roughly, and it was never questioned at all by any local person. When a youth group was asked directly what did they see tourism to bring in their community, nothing but positive things were mentioned.

Picture 7 Kids' group dancing for the visitors in Koralai Pattu.

Picture 8 Weconomy group meeting homestay owners in Koralai Pattu.

Similar positive atmosphere was reached also in the meetings in Colombo. These meetings were organized by the Sri Lankan based Weconomy coordinator and the Finnish project manager co-hosted the meetings with him. Only at the meeting with US Aid the question about how the business model would bring money to Trawise was raised. No one else asked that during the entire trip, even though it was not obvious based on the presentations given by WV and Trawise staff.

At the meetings with US Aid, Vision Fund and officials Trawise's representative showed a picture describing their business model. To protect it, he always asked the paper back claiming it to be his only one. The paper was never presented to Weconomy partners.

During the field trip there was a constant encounter of roles and goals of each partner. WV project manager tried to present the Weconomy Start programme and thus pave the road for all the future companies participating. When presenting the programme she was several times "corrected" by Trawise representative. For instance when the project manager gave a thank you speech for the week's programme at the final meeting to Koralai Pattu ADP staff Trawise representative interrupted her:

> *"But this is not Weconomy, this is Salute the World [their brand name]."*

This also made Weconomy project manager to reflect her and World Vision's role.

> *"I wonder what these companies in the end want from us. We would not like to be just the distribution channel."*

Also the role of Aalto's research in the project was unclear. Trawise representative constantly asked what is in Aalto's participation to the company. Obviously his question was not sufficiently answered as he didn't allow recording even internal meetings between the programme partners. As all the research themes were decided in forehand or at least without discussing them with Trawise, no use was seen from Aalto being a partner in the programme:

> *"Why do I have to share this idea to everyone all the time? And then people ask what then and what then. And what do I get out of it? If I had a [curse word] of a lot of money I'd throw all excess people out."*

Finpro's role as a partner was also discussed. Their role as a partner, who sells their services, left them outsiders from the beginning as they did not carry the risk with other partners. Also the previous experiences of Finpro were not entirely encouraging, as another Trawise representative put it:

> *"They make us a report and we pay. Then, if it is not valid, they can just say that there were so many issues that contributed and changed."*

5.3 Stakeholders' goals and exposure

In this section I present the programme goals and all participants' individual goals. The tension created by the differences between them and the programme goals is crucial in the development of the roles in this programme.

Weconomy Start

At the programme evaluation report (2013) of Weconomy Start the organizing participants present the project's goals as follows:

> To develop a model for a programme, that helps companies and low-income communities to build and grow sustainable business that solves economical, ecological and/or social challenges and creates profits.
>
> Create success stories of Finnish companies to build sustainable business in co-creation with poor communities.
>
> Develop a service model suitable for global expansion and implementation.
>
> Successful business cases help communities involved in India and Sri Lanka in income building.

Clearly there were two main goals: developing the programme and expand it to other countries as well as gain impact in the low-income communities with Finnish companies. The set-up and the early phase of developing obviously affected the initial partner selection of World Vision. Aalto University was needed to bring in knowledge on BOP approach and Finpro to bring (export) business experience.

What is notable here is the fact that these goals were agreed before a single company had joined the programme. During the study it soon became evident that despite the shared goal – of achieving profitable business simultaneously alleviating poverty - all stakeholders have different emphasis on the subgoals and even in the order of the main goals: which goes first – building the programme, developing new business or poverty alleviation. Not all the goals were shared by all participants, which caused confusion and inefficiencies.

For instance, after Trawise's first field trip WV Finland and company representatives met to plan for the second. When WV Finland brought up the idea of achieving scale benefits for bringing several companies to Sri Lanka at the same time, the conversation got quickly uncomfortable:

> Trawise: *"We don't want some Aurinkomatkat [large Finnish travel agency] there."*
>
> WV Finland: *"But, you know, it doesn't work like that for us."*

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For World Vision's goals on achieving impact and creating a global programme it is necessary to get as many (capable) companies on board. There will never be too many companies building better lives for the poor. Still, from the company perspective, other companies are seen as competitors – if not competing over customers, at least over World Vision's attention. Trawise also protected the contacts that they had found and created locally and were not willing to share them with other companies. They also saw themselves as representatives of the local community entitled to choose the companies that could serve the benefits of their brand and thus the community.

Having said all this, I claim that maximising the goals of one's own organization also affects the roles that different players take in the programme. I will next shortly go through the main and subgoals of each partner as they appeared during the study.

World Vision Finland

World Vision Finland has interests in BOP communities. First of all, they aim at direct benefit to people in low-income communities: finding ways that business can help alleviate poverty. Secondly World Vision Finland aims at creating a global model for World Vision to exploit BOP business partnerships for development goals. Thirdly, as strategic NGO-company partnerships are a rising theme in Finland, and also globally, being able to create a well-functioning model for this would undeniably bring prestige to its developers.

What do they have to lose? Weconomy Start is still a small fraction of World Vision Finland's work: their main emphasis is still on sponsoring children. Financing for their operation comes from Finnish sponsors and government. Weconomy Start can be seen as a new business venture, aiming at finding a new way to operate. If it fails, World Vision Finland can rely on their previous operating model – or try to find new ones. Building a new operation model can also create internal tension. This role of a new venture – that is not the priority to the entire organization – sometimes shows when for instance arranging workshops with participating companies. Weconomy team see themselves partly as consultants and companies as customers, but other experts at the organization might find it tough to allocate time for companies' needs as they see their traditional work as a priority. Still the expertise of the entire organization is needed – and promised to companies when selling the programme – as the Weconomy team itself is small.

World Vision Sri Lanka

World Vision Sri Lanka operates in several levels. Weconomy Start programme has an employer at the national office in Colombo who is being paid by World Vision Finland and is well aware of the theoretical background of BOP business, by the time of second Weconomy round. The national office acts as a broker towards national authorities and associations.

In the other hand World Vision Sri Lanka has several area development programmes (ADP) functioning in low-income communities all around the country. These ADPs play a very important role as local brokers for the companies involved in Weconomy Start. They are the ones that introduce companies to local people, facilitate the co-creation process and work as links to local authorities. Their reputation is the key to bring trustworthiness to companies entering BOP markets. What motivates them is the will to find new ways for create sources of income and survival for the poor people that are often people whose life and stories they know personally.

Engaging in new business ventures with companies largely unknown and picked by World Vision Finland creates a reputational risk for World Vision Sri Lanka. As they open up their networks risked for the use of the business, they also risk them. Towards local officials and even more so towards local communities there is a great pressure to have positive things happen soon to show that these companies can be trusted and are worth putting effort in. Still it should be noted that World Vision Sri Lanka already before Weconomy had models for cooperating with private sector and thus it can be assumed that the potential benefits exceed the risks.

Companies

Companies involved in Weconomy Start in 2014 are Trawise and Fortum. Their goals, timetable and risks are different. Trawise aims at a quick start for their business and needs to find sources of income as fast as possible. In Weconomy Start programme they need to quickly find partners and form good relations to local authorities. Operations in Sri Lanka form a remarkable part of Trawise's business at this point and success is essential. Fortum needs Weconomy to ensure that their operation methods in low-income communities are sustainable in the long run. This is not easily measured by euros, neither realized in a fast pace.

Aalto

Aalto University was one of the main developers of the programme, which makes the pioneering programme developers' prestige point apply also to its representatives. But maybe more importantly, as pointed out in the literature review of this study, bottom of the pyramid business only has a few success stories. As the same cases appear in the literature over and over again there is a need for fresh stories. The current literature also suggests that partnerships between companies and NGOs might lead to better results than companies alone trying to build business in the BOP markets. Naturally the researchers were eager to find a test bed for these ideas and find new stories to broaden the understanding on BOP markets. But the success of researchers is ultimately not measured by the ability to build success stories, but by publishing articles that describe the process. Therefore the interest of Aalto University representatives was often more on the process than on the results. As an Aalto University representative put it, when reassuring her team that they were on the right track:

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"Research is nice in the way that whether things go right or wrong, it is always interesting to us."

Finpro

At all occasions during 2014 Finpro's sole goal at the programme appeared to be selling their services. The fact that Weconomy Start programme did not include Finpro's services was brought up by Finpro in nearly all email correspondence with Finpro as well as at the meetings with companies. This, of course has to do with the fact that Finpro had no outside funding for the programme. As companies' previous experiences on Finpro were not entirely satisfying and as Finpro's current offering in India and Sri Lanka did not appeal to participating companies, in Finpro's role in Weconomy Start 2014 was marginalized.

5.4 NGO roles seen by WV staff

As businesses' role in developing markets and at development surely is a rising theme, also World Vision organized a global conference to share and develop their ideas on the topic. I participated to this three-day event in Maintal, Germany in September 2014. The conference had 35 participants from World Vision global organization, national office leaders, and people that work with company relations in the support offices.

Possible roles for an NGO, namely World Vision, were widely discussed. 12 inclusive business initiatives from five continents in which World Vision played a role in were introduced. NGO's role in these initiatives was separated into two main groups: social innovator and supporter. Innovator is a player who carries the responsibility for the initiative, leads it, bears most of the risk and collects revenues. Most likely this means that the NGO own the business in question and it has been created by the NGO. Supporter in the other hand is the more traditional role that NGOs have taken when collaborating with companies on inclusive business initiatives. In this role the NGO helps in organizing and facilitating the business initiative. They usually don't carry financial risk and the control over the venture is limited. In 11 cases out of 12 WV's role was supporter whereas only in one initiative it acted as social innovator. Also at Weconomy WV's role is a supporter.

The benefits for acting as a supporter were seen to be the learning opportunity, chance to boost brand and increase impact as well as finding new revenue streams. Whereas the downsides were possible inefficiencies, misalignment of goals, reputational risks and conflicts of interests.

The additional benefits for acting as a social innovator were the independence from companies and better control over the impacts. This in turn also brings the risk of losing the original mission and values.

Joining the business world also raises the question about sharing the profits. Should an NGO have its share of the money, if its role in building the business has been remarkable? Drawing a conclusion from the discussion in the meeting, the answer is straightforward.

> *"No. We are after impact."*

Which turns the big question into how to control the impact of these new activities.

6 Discussion

I will now discuss my findings in Tulder and Kostwinder's (2007) framework. Generally my study supports many of the themes that already appear in the academic literature on BOP partnerships. The importance of the same themes: capabilities, resources, goals and goal alignment to the roles that partners take and / or can take appear constantly in the literature and in my in my findings. Only their order and emphasis seem to be different when an NGO is in the lead of a business development programme.

6.1 Input

Input to partnerships begins from identifying possible partners, and finding common goals. Undeniably this has been a challenge for Weconomy Start as Finnish business community is small and the entire idea of BOP business is new to most companies.

World Vision Finland has looked for companies to participate in Weconomy Start by presenting the programme in various events and media targeted for Finnish companies. This raises the question whether the main emphasis, when choosing the partners, is more on the available companies than in the needs of low-income communities. Despite cocreation being a central component of the programme, it doesn't change the fact that for instance a dental care company is most likely to innovate and operate within the sector of dental care. But does it solve a critical problem of the community in question, and by whom is its significance defined? If the process started purely from the needs of a community, continued by searching companies that have capabilities to answer to these need and then started the cocreation process together, the possibilities for real, local dialogue might be greater.

An unfortunate fact for Weconomy Start has been that there has not been much choice of companies. Practically almost all companies that have showed interest have been taken in. Both literature and empirical data state that capabilities and common goals are the most influential factors contributing to the process and the success of a venture like this (Gradl and Knobloch 2010). According to my data resources are far more defining factor than capabilities to the partner selection. This might lead to unsuccessful partnerships as there haven't been enough possibilities to choose the most capable and suitable partners. This problem not only relates to resources but also to the lack of information and tools to evaluate partners' capabilities.

Another question remains on how the communities for Weconomy operations should be chosen. Would using a more comprehensive problem-solving analysis in low-income communities help to

map suitable companies and create more tailored leads to them? This is one alternative role that an NGO could take, which could also lead to greater control over the impact. Naturally World Vision Finland has knowledge on the needs of their target areas as they, as a financier, participate to the planning of area development programmes. Still this planning is based on traditional development cooperation, which differs from market-based operations by for instance strict demands for including the most vulnerable people. The most vulnerable are also the most demanding group to do business with. How and to what extend they should be included is a question that should be openly discussed and solved between the partners. Later on, when business thinking has become more implicit to World Vision staff both in Finland and in Sri Lanka and India, the way of seeing these needs might open all partners' eyes to see a wider range of solutions than at the moment.

The lack of companies sometimes put World Vision Finland into a difficult position. As it was tough to get companies join the programme, World Vision was sensitive to bring up their own goals and execute due diligence to the companies. It was also in a powerless position to realistically evaluate partners' capabilities. Namely it was in the lead, but the wish to make to programme proceed and show that things happen, thanks to Weconomy, in India and Sri Lanka, put them in a subordinate role in relation to participating companies. Also the fact that companies paid for the participation to the programme, although not even enough to get the costs covered, gave them the power of a customer and for World Vision at least some responsibilities of a service provider. This has an influence on the partner roles as a seller is expected to have more solutions to problems and more service-minded attitude than is expected from an equal partner. It should be noted that taking this role was neither self-evident nor easy for the NGO staff. For instance Trawise's push for full attention for their business only at their field trip, neglecting the meaning of the Weconomy programme itself, was not understood by World Vision Finland staff. World Vision saw the programme more as a common effort as the company thought that they participated to a paid business trip. The staff in Koralai Pattu ADP lived up to all expectations, organizing time for numerous meetings and their preparation when Trawise visited the area, in spite of not being paid for these particular tasks or being financed by World Vision Finland. Service-minded attitude was also at least partly adopted in Finland by the Weconomy team, for instance when dealing with timetables. On the other hand many of the specialists working at other World Vision projects kept concentrating on their initial tasks and didn't easily agree to spend their time on Weconomy activities. For instance internal meeting were sometimes considered more important that meeting companies participating to Weconomy Start. This is a considerable difference between a consulting agency and an NGO. In the end it might lead to more equal partnership that a full service attitude. What comes to Koralai Pattu ADP, it was sometimes questioned whether the service oriented attitude allowed giving enough valuable critical feedback. My observations also support the findings from previous studies that the NGO-corporate partnerships don't find their

formats automatically and a common operation model has to be created through compromises and negotiations (e. g. Austin 2000, Calton and al 2013). For instance the practices of companies that are used to buying services don't necessarily meet with an NGO's or university's way of working with its partners.

6.2 Throughput

Weconomy Start stakeholders' relations to each other changed in 2014 compared to the previous year. During the first year, World Vision Finland played a central role, with the help of other organizing partners, as the programme was very much in a development phase. As the programme evolved from the first year's uniform model to the second year's tailored structure, the relationships between stakeholders followed more closely the individual goals each partner had.

Many things changed. Because of the uniform model in the first year, a lot of the power was in World Vision Finland's hands: they decided the content of the workshops as well as the timing, destination and programme of field trips. They were also in charge on most practical arrangements. The workshops organized handled BOP issues in a more general level, trying to give something for everyone. Sri Lankan and Indian partners had limited communication with the companies before the field trips. Also the evaluation of the programme (2013) recognizes World Vision Finland as the most central partner. For instance, when presenting cooperation between partners all other partners are presented in relation to World Vision Finland. A World Vision Finland representative often brought up the difficulties that seemed to appear with companies contacting Indian or Sri Lankan staff directly. These challenges were especially apparent in 2013 (Nahi and Halme 2014). After all, this might already be a point where experienced Finnish and local NGO staff are needed to shorten the mental distances between business and rural people and people from different continents.

> "I wonder why they don't talk directly to our local offices. If I had my own company, I would."

This changed in 2014. There were only two companies participating and both companies of them received individual service. For instance skype calls with World Vision India and Sri Lanka staff was organized and a few times even the contact people at ADP level in Sri Lanka participated. Direct company needs were discussed and action plans were made. This was most likely one of the reasons that encouraged Trawise to contact their Sri Lankan partners straight and create an independent relationship with them. The companies also differed from the preceding participants by their capabilities, resources and experience in international business.

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The dynamics in 2014 brought Trawise close to the centre of the action concerning Sri Lanka. At times it became evident that there was controversy on whose role in the process is more central – Trawise's or Weconomy programme's that was represented by World Vision Finland. During field trips both had their own agenda: Trawise building its own business; World Vision Finland also informing on Weconomy Start programme and paving the road for companies that would join the programme in the future.
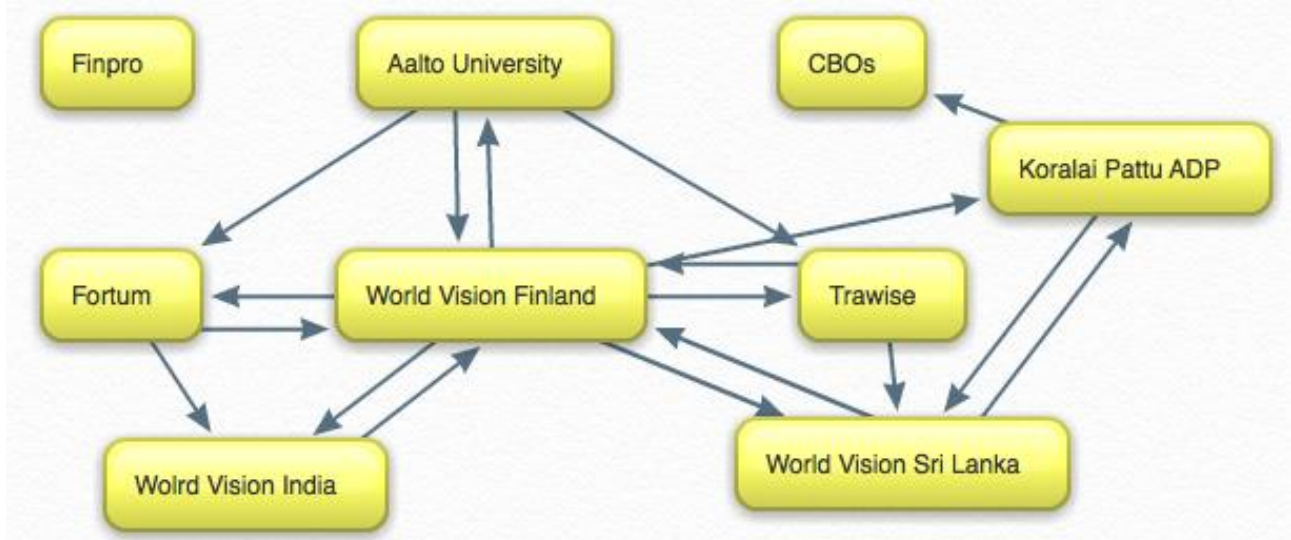
Picture 5, Weconomy Start stakeholder map 2014, own construction.

The stakeholder map drawn from the relations between Weconomy Start partners in 2014 comes close to decentred stakeholder map (Werhane 2008), which has a number of hubs and connections between partners. The arrows show the main flows of communication. There were sporadic contacts also between partners that are not connected by arrows (for instance Finpro answering to emails and participating to two meetings), but they were not significant contributions to the programme process.

Looking at the roles presented by Peterman (2013) (section 2.2.2) it was clear that the role of an integrator was occupied by World Vision Finland. It has the highest degree centrality (Peterman and al 2014) as most of the communication and practical arrangements flew through their hands and it also has most direct contacts to other partners, only the contact to CBOs is done through other partners. Of the Finnish partners they were the only one who had financial resources allocated for project administration and the project manager was a World Vision Finland employee. In the Finnish end World Vision constantly asked for more contribution for organizing the project from Aalto University, but as all Aalto's financing for the project was directed to research, they only received it depending on the personal drivers of Aalto staff. When conducting the field trip in Sri Lanka, World Vision Finland representative was on average most familiar with the other partners, the Weconomy programme, the business idea and local conditions and therefore gained naturally the role of a host and an introducer. Although all partners were aware of the dangers that were

embedded in this: as the business develops, more and more responsibilities should move to companies and the role of World Vision Finland's staff should become minimized.

I claim that it is critical to the business venture's success that the company succeeds to occupy the role of a director. The business will run by the company, and their skills and capabilities are the reason why the NGO helped them to start business in a BOP market. If the lead is at the NGO's hands in the long run, the business will not have the best use of all partners' skills and the business drive won't be unleashed.

In this case, especially Trawise showed some interest in occupying the role of a director. It had a central role in communications, but also had technical and financial resources to contribute to the goals. Trawise also has a clear vision on what should be achieved and weren't eager to discuss or renegotiate it with other partners. Still it lacked the capability or the will to communicate directly with all partners. Due to Fortum's slow start, it did not occupy any role as clearly as Trawise. Since the financial resources were strong, but needs still under mapping it could be seen as a customer during my period of study.

Finpro was left as an outsider during 2014. Its offering and other participants' needs simply did not meet. Also it was the only participant whose involvement would have required separate billing, which obviously raises the bar to include it as a partner.

Aalto University has to be described with different terms towards different partners. With Fortum Aalto acted as a sharer: organizing workshops, but getting limited data for research. For Trawise Aalto's offering was not seen useful and Aalto was became a user – getting almost free access to information created by others. In relation to World Vision Finland Aalto acted as a sharer and a user – i.e. close to an equal partner that, rather contrastingly and unequally, operated without great pressure or risk. With Sri Lankan and Indian World Vision offices Aalto had no independent contacts and remained therefore an outsider.

For Sri Lankan and Indian World Vision offices as well as the Koralai Pattu ADP remained the role of a sharer. They allowed others access to their information as well as offered practical help without having guarantee for return. It has to be noted though that Weconomy provided the financing for the national offices for participating to the programme. Still, during my period of study they remained sharers, although of course with the possibility for high returns eventually, depending on the success of the programme. Partly the same applies to local CBOs in Koralai Pattu. All meaningful communication with local populations happened through Koralai Pattu ADP staff. Not even Sri Lankan national office representative had a common language with them. On one hand all local groups met showed interest to the programme and were eager to present their home stays, farms and handicrafts (as a sharer), but on the other hand no opinions, critique or development ideas were expressed (user) or even asked (outsider). Measured by betweenness

centrality (Peterman and al 2014, section 2.2.2 in this thesis) CBO are the most outside partner of the programme. Still it should be remembered that I participated to the first field trip that was planned to be more an introduction than deeply cocreational effort.

6.3 Output

The output of Weconomy Start partnership process – how well did the individual and the project goals actualize – is challenging to evaluate, as my study period ended before the year-long programme reached its end.

Still it can be said that Ashman (2001) and Tulder and Pfisterer (2013) are most likely right when they remind of the need for rigorous negotiation over the goals between all partners. The fact that programme goals had been set between the organizing partners only, before the companies joined the programme, obviously caused complexity for instance of the need and benefits of including research in the programme. The negotiation could also help to build each partner the most useful role in regard to their own as well as programme's shared goals.

It is also important to consider how to play the roles and share responsibilities and leadership in a company-NGO partnership when starting cooperation in low-income communities. Naturally it is a new setting for most companies and they use World Vision's expertise to open doors in a new environment. But already in the short run the role of an integrator or a director should be taken by companies as growing their business is not possible with NGO resources and capabilities.

Also the data from the previous year predicts that exit from the programme might prove troublesome if the help from World Vision has been generous. World Vision has a strong interest to have the business blooming once they are started as the end of business might mean end of income for people in the community in question. All this should be agreed already when starting the partnership and as Tulder and Phisterer (2008) advice, during the partnership period attention should be paid to building all parties' capabilities to ensure the sustainability of the mission.

7 Conclusions

7.1 Main findings and theoretical contribution

Creating a globally pioneering programme is not easy. Already in two years Weconomy Start has taken major steps forward to deliver more impact in low-income communities and to support business better. Constant development and discussion are needed not only to achieve the programme goals, but also to create a functional operation model. But Weconomy Start's main idea – to create profitable business that solves development problems – is worth putting large efforts in. Fortunately this seems to get support from Finnish financiers and World Vision's offices worldwide.

Looking at my research questions, goals, resources and capabilities define the roles that different partners take in a business development programme. If the programme has a pre-defined goal, the goal alignment with new partners joining the programme does not happen automatically. The goals of each partner are usually set before joining the programme. The reason to join the programme is to achieve them – not the programme goals. These goals rise from each partners' original reason of existence. Individual people working at the partner organizations do have surprising capabilities, but organizations' combined capabilities in the programme are likely to stay as they are were before joining it. These goals and capabilities guide all partners to stick to their usual roles – university emphasizes research, NGO field impact and companies profit. Separate funding for the programme, instead of every partner finding their financing separately, could break this model and bring in different operational mode. But this only takes place when there truly is a common cake to share between the partners.

I also argue that even though literature equally emphasises the role of resources and capabilities in partner selection, at the end of the day the resources are more defining factor in partner selection and the role development in a joint business development programme. This may not lead to an optimal end result and more attention should be given to finding the most suitable capabilities.

This study contributes to the current literature on BOP partnerships and partner roles as such, presenting one scenario of dynamics in an NGO-led business development programme. In the literature there is no other study on a programme similar to this. This study also highlights the aspects of communication and trust from the NGO side in a business-NGO-partnership and

strengthens the previous arguments on goals, linkages, capabilities and resources defining partners' roles (e. g. Tashman and Marano 2010, Gradl and Knobloch 2010).

7.2 Managerial implications

In Finland there is a remarkable lack of companies that innovate solutions to alleviate poverty related problems in low-income communities. Few companies have capabilities for cocreating BOP business, possess the human and financial resources needed, and finally have the will to do it. Therefore the Weconomy programme should be opened up to be global. This would enable partner selection to be based more tightly on local problems, not on the interest and offering of Finnish companies. Widening the reach also in developing world would, in turn, increase the opportunities for Finnish companies. This would also allow choosing companies to cooperate with based more on their capabilities than on their resources.

Looking at the functionality of the programme itself to achieve programme goals, all goals and subgoals should be discussed every time a new partner joins the programme. Common funding could ease all (organizing) partners to break out from their original roles and work to achieve the common goals instead of the individual ones.

Direct communication between all partners both on goals and the process builds company and southern NGO capabilities and enhances the sustainability of the mission. Therefore all partners should be encouraged to this from the beginning.

7.3 Future research

Partner roles and their contribution to BOP partnerships' success offer a wide variety of themes that are still untapped for the research community. In this thesis I argue that partner selection should be based on the capabilities of the partners. At the moment there is no research on how an NGO could assess the capabilities of a company. In Weconomy Start's particular case, a more long-term study on the development of partner roles along with the development of the business could turn the role setting completely different from the setting I presented. The most interesting and meaningful question probably is, how these roles contribute to the success of a BOP business venture. If Weconomy Start programme expands to other World Vision countries, interesting new material will arise for comparative studies.

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Trawise in Weconomy Start – preparatory meetings

We propose three preparatory meetings before Trawise's first field trip to Sri Lanka:

1. Date TBC, at 9-12:30
   - Meeting Weconomy Start partners
   - Discussing Salut the World -business idea

2. Date TBC, at 9-14
   - Lessons learnt from business at the Base of the Pyramid
   - Tourism services in Sri Lanka
   - Getting ready for the field trip

3. Date TBC, at 9-12:30
   - Cultural coaching
   - What's in it for different stakeholders?
   - Any other business

   - Optional: Tips and tools for co-creation

Date TBC, 9-12:30

1. **Meeting Weconomy Start partners**
   A compact 1.5 hour meeting. What is the structure of World Vision locally and globally and what's in this structure for Trawise? What do WV offices work on in Eastern Sri Lanka? What does Aalto University bring to this partnership? How do we each see co-creation, bottom of the pyramid (BOP), poverty and inclusive business.

2. **Discussing Salut the World –business idea**
   A deep dive into your business idea – questions, comments and joint brainstorming. Let's look at the idea from several perspectives: previous successes of doing business at low-income markets, the needs and context of low-income communities in Eastern Sri Lanka and the business potential.

Date TBC, 9-14

3. **Lessons learnt from business at the Base of the Pyramid**
   Discussion with researchers from Aalto and visiting entrepreneurs over a cup of chai. The possibilities and challenges in doing business with people who earn less than five dollars per day. What are our own experiences and what can we learn from others?

4. **Tourism services in Sri Lanka**
   Sharing some preliminary thoughts on the tourism sector in Sri Lanka. Do we know of other initiatives on sustainable tourism? What's the scene like in Eastern Sri Lanka? Includes a Webex discussion with WV staff onsite.

5. **Getting ready for the field trip**
   Let's share our expectations and hopes, note down our main objectives and discuss the programme and practicalities.

Date TBC, 9-12:30

6. **Cultural coaching**
   What are the first differences you bump into when discussing with local partners in Sri Lanka? How should you organize the meetings? A half an hour tips session from our anthropologists XX and WV Sri Lanka expert XX to smoothen your way.

7. **What's in it for different stakeholders?**
   Mapping the potential societal and ecological impact of the Salut the World –activities in Sri Lanka. After the mapping, we turn to a speed-dating exercise to find the most memorable ways to present the initiative to Sri Lankan partners. How do we motivate local tour agencies, officials, low-income handicraft producers and others to participate and give their best to this partnership?

8. **Any other business**
   Time set aside for issues that have arisen during our meetings.

Optional – **we can have this before the first or the second field trip**

9. **Tips and tools for co-creation.** We want to build the Salut the World initiative so that it benefits us all. But how to get people excited and to share their ideas when the cultural, economic and educational gaps are deep? A playful three-hour introduction to participatory tools by Aalto researcher and WV experts. After this you will be better equipped for co-creation during the field trips.

Key principles

In order for different companies and individuals to get most out of Weconomy Start, we strive to ensure that all meetings and workshops are:

1. **Tailored**

Different companies and individuals participating in Weconomy Start have very different expectations, business ideas and knowhow. Some have ample experience of low-income contexts, co-creative innovation and NGO partnerships, others less.

We seek to offer each person and company the background information (s)he wants and needs. The wants and needs are discussed when negotiating the Weconomy Start partnership and also in a preparatory interview, held with the participating person.

2. **Interactive**

Throughout Weconomy Start, the company representatives are on the driver's seat, deciding how to internationalize their business. Background information will be offered in an interactive manner, in meetings and possibly also in small workshops.

A key objective is to foster an atmosphere where companies, organizers, invited experts and low-income communities comment and brainstorm on business ideas in a lively, constructive and equal manner.

3. Coherent

While collecting knowledge and tips from many different experts, we seek to ensure that different discussions tie together. We try, for example, to have good facilitation in workshops.

Secondly, all content will relate to doing business at BOP contexts. We do utilise popular business development and innovation tools, but there are no generic workshops on business development or innovation methods.

4. Linked to other actors

We also encourage participating companies to forge links to other knowledgeable people, organizations and events in Finland and in the target areas. In 2014, companies may benefit eg from:
- Meeting "BOP-guru" Stuart Hart in Helsinki in June 2014
- Attending Nordic Business Forum in Sept 2014
- Participating in a web-based BOP-course arranged by the international network of BOP Learning Labs

NOTE – The programme has its limits: We are not in a position to do extensive company-specific studies, like full market surveys or comprehensive partner searches. Rather, we offer companies our active support (suggestions, brainstorming and contacts to knowledgeable experts) in identifying some possible markets and partners.

Trawise's Weconomy Start Field-trip, 21.4.-2.5.

Objectives of the trip:

- To develop an understanding of the economic, social and ecological situation of the Eastern Province and Sri Lanka.

- To meet and brainstorm with local WV staff; getting food for thought for STW's business idea.

- To meet people who may become members of Trawise's co-creation team and future partners: local communities, entrepreneurs, experts and officials.

- To visit relevant development projects and local businesses; to meet with financiers and developers.

- To get an idea of ethical and ecological business challenges prevalent in Sri Lanka.

	Mon 21	Tue 22	Wed 23	Thu 24	Fri 25	Sat 26	Sun 27
Morning			FIGHTING POVERTY –theme * School visit and disabled childrens´ class (Sponsored by Pizza-Online) *Minniya Waterproject (R-kioski)	* NUTRITION AND HEALTH –theme * Health education workshop for parents and children.	* Departure to Kandy	* Visiting Kandy	* Visiting Sigiriya "Rock Mountain"
Afternoon	* Departure from Helsinki	*Arrival in Colombo (afternoon) -> transport to Kalpitiya	* Visit to a genuinely poor village, possibility to discuss with local people - A home visit to a fisherman´s family.	* visit to the health clinic and its everyday functions and activities * visit to a home garden	* free evening in Kandy	* Travel to Sigiriya	* Travel to Passikudah

	Mon 28	Tue 29	Wed 30	Thu 1	Fri 2	Sat 3
Morning	* Meeting with Koralaipattu ADP (Getting to know, presenting and commenting STW's idea, presenting the Eastern Province and the ADP). * Meeting with XX	* Meeting with Eastern Tourism Development Grantee Ltd. * Meeting with XX *Meeting with ILO for their intervention.	* Meeting with KAVIYA organization (Gender)-Small entrepreneur. *Meeting with Hotel CEO's. * Meeting with Tourism Board.	* Meeting with Koralaipattu ADP: brainstorming about STW's ideas	* Meetings in Colombo in the afternoon	
Afternoon	* Discussion with Valvin Udayam Organization (Differently able society). * Visiting to community	* Discussion with Handicraft producers. * Visiting community	*Meeting with Muslim small entrepreneur group. * Visiting communities	* Departure to Colombo	* Meeting with WV team in Colombo * Flight back to Finland	* Arrival in Finland

Weconomy Start interview for companies

General expectations

- Why is your company participating in Weconomy Start? What preliminary business ideas do you have? What benefits could it bring to low-income people? What stage do you wish to reach by January 2014?
- How much work time do you have for Start? How do you discuss the new ideas born in Start (who's your supervisor, is some specific colleague or team supporting you etc)?
- What concerns do you have related to the programme?
- Tell about your own professional background. What do you personally bring and expect from Start?
- What expectations does your company/you have for the first workshops?

Business skills

- Do you tailor your products/services for different markets? What about the other parts of a business model such as partnerships, distribution channels or revenue sharing models?
- Are you familiar with the idea of co-creation or user-centred innovation? What about related tools/methods? What have you utilised them for?
- What kind of partnerships does your company have with actors from other sectors like civil society organisations, public actors or academia? Are they related to your core business? Outside industrial countries?

Knowledge of target markets - low-income markets in India and Sri Lanka

- Does your company have operations outside of industrialised countries? What experiences can you draw from when seeking to enter low-income markets?
- Have you travelled or lived in developing countries? Is the economy, society or culture of India or Sri Lanka familiar to you?

Due Diligence

- Has the company been subject to legal action or strikes? Have you gained negative attention from NGOs, communities, workers unions etc?
- Does the company publish a CSR report or undertake other CSR activities?