

Strengthening America's Global Development Partnerships: A Policy Blueprint

Executive Summary

In a paper, "Strengthening America's Global Development Partnerships: A Policy Blueprint for Better Collaboration Between the U.S. Government, Business and Civil Society," Brookings scholars Jane Nelson and Noam Unger offer recommendations on how the U.S. government can better position itself within the 21st century global development landscape.

The policy mandate for more effective collaboration is urgent given the compounding economic and environmental crises that currently threaten development, the outdated U.S. foreign assistance system, and the new global development arena that is characterized by a multitude of influential new actors and by more technology-enabled, market-oriented and locally-driven approaches to development. Within the context of broader foreign assistance reform, the Obama administration and Congress have an opportunity to retool official U.S. efforts to more effectively and efficiently support global development in partnership with this new ecosystem of actors, while at the same time improving accountability and transparency.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen U.S. government capabilities to make innovative and strategic investments:

Enhance the ability to recruit and retain professional and technical expertise (particularly at USAID); establish a prestigious cross-sector Development Partnerships Fellows Program; improve interagency cooperation; demand policy coherence; support social entrepreneurship for global development in addition to domestic concerns; establish a fund for replicating and scaling successful innovation; expand partnership models to support small and medium enterprises; invest in collaborative research and development; reinforce credit guarantee and other risk management programs, especially for fragile states; and partner with other donors and multilaterals.

2. Encourage cross-sector partnerships aligned with core competencies:

Evaluate and expand the use of global framework agreements between the government, corporate and NGO sectors; work with coalitions of companies and NGOs; scale-up the application of world-class technology; harness financial innovation for social gain; mobilize multi-sector logistics capabilities for humanitarian relief; and make global value chains work better for the poor.

3. Promote international service, professional exchanges and citizen engagement:

Expand leadership and professional exchanges; mobilize retirees and graduate students for international service; establish a Corporation for International Study and Service; and leverage new media and information technology platforms.

4. Support development of global norms and guidelines:

Facilitate voluntary multi-stakeholder accountability initiatives; strengthen the U.S. National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines; integrate standards and development benefits into global finance and trade; and build the capacity of media and civil society organizations in developing countries.

5. Leverage the "bully pulpit" to mobilize stakeholders:

Convene leaders from companies, foundations, NGOs, faith communities and academia at a presidential summit and challenge them to partner with the U.S. government in addressing a targeted agenda of high-priority global development objectives through the creation of development cooperation networks.

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