



Equitable Partnerships through Triangular Co-operation: Experiences from
Canadian Civil Society

March 2020

Report prepared by:

Arianna Abdelnaiem, Research Assistant

and

Shannon Kindornay, Director of Research, Policy and Practice

Canadian Council for International Co-operation

**Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)
Conseil canadien pour la coopération internationale (CCCI)**

39 McArthur Ave., Ottawa, ON, K1L 8L7

+1.613.241.7007 | www.ccic.ca

Acknowledgements

This report was written by Arianna Abdelnaiem and Shannon Kindornay at the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), with the support of Global Affairs Canada. The team would like to thank participating Canadian civil society organizations and others who enthusiastically participated to the research. The authors thank Annie Brunton, Natasha Mooney, Britney Raby, Carmen Sorger and Gina Watson for their review of earlier drafts of this report. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of CCIC, CCIC members or Global Affairs Canada.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CCIC	Canadian Council for International Co-operation
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SGDs	Sustainable Development Goals
GPI	Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Co-operation
MNCH	health of mothers, newborns and children

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	3
Highlights	5
Introduction	7
Understanding Triangular Co-operation.....	8
A new definition	8
Voluntary Guidelines for Effective Triangular Co-operation.....	9
The value of triangular co-operation	10
Research Approach	10
Awareness-raising activities	10
Desk-based review	10
Engagement in the research process	11
Research Limitations	12
Triangular co-operation projects.....	12
Findings	13
Awareness of triangular co-operation	13
CSO participation in triangular co-operation	14
Emerging approaches to triangular co-operation.....	14
Equitable partnerships	17
Achieving greater impact	18
Challenges of triangular co-operation.....	19
Role of GAC in supporting triangular co-operation	22
Lessons Learned.....	24
Conclusions	25
Recommendations	26
Annex 1: Summary of Projects Reviewed	28
Annex 2: Research Approach	32
Triangular co-operation research schedule	32
Semi-structured interview guides	33

Highlights

New forms of co-operation are emerging as the global community works towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this context, triangular co-operation is increasing as governments and non-state actors pursue North-South-South partnerships to realize sustainable development outcomes. While triangular co-operation was traditionally the remit of governments, recent efforts have opened space for a more contemporary understanding that includes all development actors, such as civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector and regional organizations. In this context, government and non-state actors work as facilitators of North-South-South co-operation, where pivotal partners provide technical expertise and capacity in delivering on sustainable development outcomes in beneficiary countries.

In this context, the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) launched a research project, supported by Global Affairs Canada, to examine how Canadian civil society partners and other stakeholders are engaging in triangular co-operation. The research project aimed to develop a baseline of how Canadian CSOs working in international development and the humanitarian sector engage in triangular co-operation.

Carried out over October 2019-February 2020, the initiative raised awareness of triangular co-operation through social media and targeted communications through CCIC's network, engaged over 30 CSOs in the research process and identified opportunities and challenges for increased triangular co-operation with and by Canadian CSOs.

Eight key findings emerge from the research.

- 1. Canadian CSOs are mostly unaware of triangular co-operation, its new definition and the Voluntary Guidelines for Effective Triangular Co-operation.** Some CSOs questioned whether triangular co-operation is a sustainable way to partner, noting it is a trend that may ultimately fade if unused given lack of awareness and specific funding supports.
- 2. CSOs adopt approaches to triangular co-operation in projects that have a regional scope by partnering with regionally mandated institutions and/or promote South-South learning.**
- 3. CSOs see triangular co-operation as a path to equitable partnerships with Southern partners and the adoption of equitable partnership principles.** Triangular co-operation has potential to decolonize development assistance by shifting the focus and power from Northern partners to Southern partners.
- 4. A defining feature of Canadian CSOs engagement in triangular co-operation is that partners play multiple roles.** For example, Canadian facilitators and their pivotal partners often engage in mutual learning exchanges with beneficiaries and share implementation activities.
- 5. Significant investments are needed in relationship-building and establishing effective ways of working between facilitating, pivotal and beneficiary partners to ensure success and reduce transaction costs.**
- 6. By harnessing local capacities and expertise, triangular co-operation is an effective modality to reach target beneficiaries, influence policymakers and work in challenging political contexts.**

For example, some CSOs noted that triangular co-operation was effective for working in fragile contexts and conflict zones. Pivotal partners often have greater knowledge of and comfort working in neighbouring regions. Moreover, proximity and similarities in experiences between Southern partners contributes to improved engagement with stakeholders and decisionmakers in beneficiary countries.

- 7. Hindering factors for increased engagement in triangular co-operation include lack of awareness, (mis)conceptions of higher transaction costs associated with the modality compared to other forms of development co-operation and challenges associated with current partnership practices at Global Affairs Canada that are not supportive of flexible, more equitable partnerships.** Some CSOs argue that existing funding and contracting mechanisms, such as Contribution Agreements, are ill-suited for equitable triangular partnerships. A limited number of CSOs suggested that grants may be better suited as they have greater flexibility in terms of changes to partnerships over the course of the project.
- 8. Key enablers of triangular co-operation include increased capacity in the Global South, the adoption of principles related to equitable partnerships by Northern CSOs and openness to support triangular co-operation by Global Affairs Canada.**

Overall, the report provides insight into Canadian CSOs' existing experiences and practices of triangular co-operation. The report points to the positive long-term effects of triangular co-operation not only on beneficiary partners but also facilitating and pivotal partners—reinforcing the concept of equitable partnerships. Based on the report's survey of Canadian CSOs and the variance in triangular co-operation modality usage and awareness, the report shows there is no one size fits-all approach. It concludes that for triangular co-operation to persist and grow in popularity, there is a need for flexibility in project objectives, guidelines and reporting measures. Canadian government support has potential to enhance project results geared towards sustainable development and lasting partnerships. Flexibility in project design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation requires policy changes by funders but also open-mindedness from all partners to pursue a model of collaboration that ensures an equitable approach for all parties involved.

Introduction

The international co-operation landscape is changing. Governments, private sector stakeholders, academics and civil society organizations (CSOs) are finding new and innovative ways to collaborate to reach the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Within this context, new forms of co-operation are emerging that bring together non-state actors and governments to work through North-South-South partnerships.

Recognizing the increasing role and potential of North-South-South partnership in international co-operation, a multi-stakeholder Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Co-operation (GPI) was launched in 2016 at the High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation in Nairobi, Kenya. The GPI gathers a variety of development stakeholders to better position triangular co-operation in the current development landscape given the rising importance of South-South and triangular co-operation. It aims to support exchanges of experiences and analysis and the development of tools for effective triangular co-operation.¹ The GPI has become a platform to share lessons learned, operational tools and best practice. In the context of evolving co-operation modalities, the GPI developed a contemporary and more inclusive definition of triangular co-operation, moving from a focus on state actors to an understanding that includes all development actors, such as CSOs, the private sector and regional organizations.

While the Government of Canada plays an active role in the GPI on triangular co-operation, less is known about the ways in which Canadian civil society partners and other stakeholders are making use of this form of co-operation. With the support of Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)² launched a research project to develop a baseline with respect to how Canadian CSOs engage in triangular co-operation. Although there is anecdotal evidence that Canadian CSOs do partake in triangular co-operation, the actual scale of their engagement and extent of activities remains unknown.

Through a research initiative over October 2019-February 2020, CCIC raised awareness of triangular co-operation, developed a baseline of Canadian CSO engagement in and experiences with triangular co-operation and identified opportunities and challenges for increased triangular co-operation with and by Canadian CSOs. The research aimed to identify lessons learned and good practices to inform the work of CSOs and future engagement on triangular co-operation by GAC.

The report begins with a presentation of triangular co-operation—what it is and why it matters. The second section provides an overview of the research approach that informs this report. The third section elaborates on key findings followed by an analysis of lessons learned. Finally, the report provides concluding remarks, forward-looking reflections and recommendations for GAC to increase engagement in triangular co-operation. Annex 1 lists the projects examined and Annex 2 provides the research schedule and semi-structured interview guides.

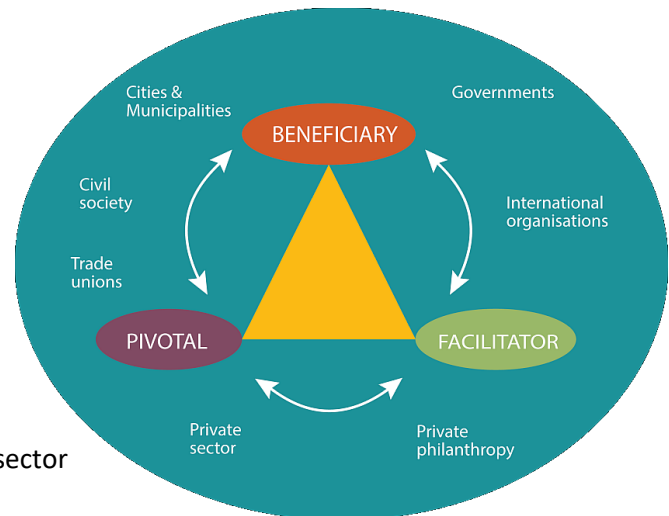
¹ United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation. 2018. The Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Cooperation. <http://www.expo.unsouthsouth.org/2017-antalya/programme/side-events/29-nov-d/>

² CCIC was uniquely positioned to carry out this research as an organization that represents and engages more than 80 Canadian CSOs across Canada that work in international development and humanitarian assistance.

Understanding Triangular Co-operation

A new definition

Previously, triangular co-operation emphasized state actors accompanied by a traditional donor, an emerging donor and a beneficiary partner (government) in the form of North-South-South co-operation. The understanding of triangular co-operation was grounded in a view of collaboration between governments in the Global North and the Global South. The contemporary definition developed by the GPI includes all actors in development, not only government but also international organizations, CSOs, academia, the private sector and more.



Triangular co-operation includes a range of stakeholders that play three key roles:

1. The **beneficiary partner** is the target of the development results to be achieved.
2. The **pivotal partner** has proven experience and shares its resources, knowledge and expertise, often playing an implementing role.
3. The **facilitating partner** connects beneficiary and pivotal partners to form a partnership and provides financial and/or technical support.

The roles of either partner can be taken on by more than one actor, depending on the type of project. It is also possible for partners to change roles over the course of a project's life cycle. What is noteworthy within the triangular co-operation context, is that all partners enter a sphere in which knowledge and expertise are shared and where innovation and co-creation are key to success. Inclusive partnerships, particularly those supporting the lives of the poorest, constitute the foundation of triangular co-operation and are crucial to leaving no one behind. As such, this type of modality harnesses the comparative advantages of different partners by making use of complementary strengths to build relationships of trust, learning opportunities and synergies. In many cases, support in tackling a development challenge is solicited by any of the three partners. The facilitator helps connect the pivotal partner to the beneficiary partner, while supporting the collaboration financially and technically and the pivotal partner provides expertise and other resources required by the beneficiary.

CANADA'S SUPPORT FOR TRIANGULAR CO-OPERATION

Guided by its Feminist International Assistance Policy, Canada is a strong advocate for women's empowerment and gender rights at the global level. Canada is a member of the GPI and played an active leadership role in the creation of Voluntary Guidelines for Effective Triangular Co-operation. Other relevant areas related to triangular co-operation include Canada's work with the Task Team for CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment. The Task Team is a multi-stakeholder network of representatives from civil society, donor and recipient governments. It aims to advance effective CSO participation in development processes and monitors the implementation of aid effectiveness principles and civil society commitments outlined in the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action.

Voluntary Guidelines for Effective Triangular Co-operation

Triangular co-operation offers flexible and adaptable approaches to challenges in development. It builds on the strengths of partners to find cost-effective and innovative solutions in ways that are sensitive to the contexts of the targeted beneficiary. In 2019, the GPI's work culminated in the creation of Voluntary Guidelines for Effective Triangular Co-operation. These guidelines offer a set of goalposts and a shared commitment for ensuring effectiveness in equitable triangular partnerships.

Figure 1. Voluntary Guidelines for Effective Triangular Co-operation



The value of triangular co-operation

The challenge of realizing the SDGs is significant. There is strong recognition of the need to pool resources, strategies and innovative ways of working across sectors and stakeholders to address complex challenges. Triangular co-operation offers an important route to identifying sustainable, locally relevant solutions that harness and respect the expertise of diverse stakeholders. It promotes knowledge, resources and expertise sharing among equal partners and serves as a complementary alternative to other forms of international co-operation. According to a 2019 study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),³ triangular co-operation is a transformative development modality that combines the strengths of multiple partners with potential to develop flexible solutions to sustainable development challenges.



RAISING AWARENESS ON THE VALUE OF TRIANGULAR CO-OPERATION

While the work of the GPI presents new and exciting opportunities to explore and improve triangular co-operation, more work may be needed to demonstrate the value of the modality to Canadian partners. Throughout the research process, some participants questioned the utility of “another definition” noting that development co-operation sector has a history of renaming concepts and assigning new labels to existing approaches. These participants felt more work is needed to emphasize the benefits of triangular co-operation to Canadian partners to increase their engagement in the modality.

Research Approach

Given the need to raise awareness of the new definition of triangular co-operation among Canadian CSOs, CCIC took a sequenced, iterative approach to the research that included awareness-raising activities, data collection through desk-based reviews, focus groups and, more importantly, member engagement through interviews and exchanges on initiatives and projects related to triangular co-operation.

Awareness-raising activities

In October 2019, the project was introduced via CCIC’s newsletter, social media and a new, dedicated webpage on triangular co-operation.⁴ At the Summit on Canada’s Global Leadership⁵ in November 2019 that saw over 500 participants, CCIC hosted a session on triangular co-operation to further raise awareness of the concept and as part of strategies to engage CSOs and other non-state actors participating in the conference. CCIC also regularly referred to the project and concept over the course of the research in various meetings with members, including in discussions on CCIC’s research and policy agenda. Finally, CCIC made a final call for organizations to participate in the research in January 2020.

Desk-based review

In October 2019, CCIC carried out a review of the websites of 66 of its 85 members (those with overseas programming) probing for projects demonstrating triangular co-operation. A tracking sheet was created to gather publicly available data on member profiles, project contacts, project listings and descriptions,

³ OECD. 2019. Enabling effective triangular co-operation. Paris: OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/enabling-effective-triangular-co-operation_5fc4501e-en

⁴ CCIC. 2019. Triangular Co-operation. <https://ccic.ca/triangular-co-operation/>

⁵ CCIC. 2019. Summit on Canada’s Global Leadership. <https://globalleadershipsummit.ca/>

donors, facilitator, pivotal and beneficiary partners, as well as relevant project resources and results. Upon completion of the initial desk-based review, CCIC identified 13 members with relevant projects. Another 41 showed signs of potentially engaging in triangular co-operation while the remaining 12 were unclear, either due to lack of project descriptions or project listings.

Engagement in the research process

Through CCIC's direct mailing to members (member only communications) and the CCIC newsletter, members and non-members were invited to contact CCIC to participate in the research project. Overall, this approach yielded limited responses. Of the 18 responses received, 14 members advised they did practice triangular co-operation, while four noted they did not. Three organizations indicated their interest at the Summit, all of which noted they were unsure of whether the modality was applied within their respective organizations but interested in knowing more.

As a result of limited uptake through mass communications, 66 CCIC members were emailed directly with an inquiry to showcase their triangular co-operation projects. From this process 22 organizations indicated an interest in the research project. For the 14 organizations that then identified relevant projects, next steps consisted of sharing project information and a semi-structured phone interview with questions provided ahead of time (Annex 2). For members who either did not practice triangular co-operation or wanted to know more about it, the research team carried out discussions to understand interest and views on the modality. Two interviews were held focusing on perceptions regarding barriers to triangular co-operation and its utility as a modality in international co-operation. These interviews helped solidify findings related to awareness of the modality, as well as to confirm interest of Canadian CSOs in the possibility of partnerships of this nature. Finally, in February 2020, CCIC interviewed three GAC project officers responsible for projects that include a triangular component. All three interviewees provided perceptions and lessons learned that further solidified findings from the interviews provided by CCIC members and others.

Attended by some 40 participants, the workshop at the Summit on Canada's Global Leadership generated further interest in the research project. Following a presentation on triangular co-operation from academic, government, private sector and civil society representatives, participants joined discussion groups to examine the policy and programming dimensions of triangular co-operation. As a result of participation at the Summit, six organizations (re)confirmed their interest in the research project.

TRIANGULAR CO-OPERATION AT THE SUMMIT ON CANADA'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

On November 27, CCIC hosted a session on triangular co-operation in partnership with Global Affairs Canada to raise awareness about the new concept of triangular co-operation among Canada's humanitarian and international development sector. The session included representatives from government, academia, civil society, the private sector and the OECD.

Research Limitations

Lack of publicly available information was a key challenge in the research. CSOs websites often lacked information on project budget, partners, activities or results. In some cases, they did not list projects. Contact points for projects are generally unavailable, which in turn delayed obtaining additional information. In addition, the Global Affairs Project Browser was not consistently up to date to reflect actual results, budgets, partners or project names. Information was not always reflective of what was available on CSO websites and vice versa.

CSOs were not always willing to discuss their projects either. This was due to the precarious nature of some projects that were still within planning, approval or inception phases. Organisations were concerned that presenting information prematurely may affect project approvals.

Finally, outreach mechanisms yield limited results in the initial phases of the research. Targeted emails were not as successful as anticipated in enticing members to participate. This challenge was addressed through word of mouth and by including the session on triangular co-operation at the Summit.

Triangular co-operation projects

At the start of the research, CCIC identified 26 possible triangular co-operation projects from the desk-based review. However, only 16 projects were included by the end of the research. The total number of projects decreased as challenges occurred in scheduling interviews and members did not always have additional project information or an internal contact better suited to speak to the project and modality. Others dropped out of the study because, upon clarification, their projects did not include triangular co-operation.

Overall, this report is informed by a desk-based review of 66 organizations, discussions with approximately 40 individuals, largely from civil society but also academia, the private sector and government and 15 semi-structured interviews with civil society (12), private sector (1) and Global Affairs Canada (3) representatives. Conversations with members, web-based information, project documents provided by organizations and telephone and email interviews inform the findings below and the 16 project profiles available as part of this initiative.⁶ These profiles are one to three-page summaries highlighting project details such as sector focus, budgets, partners, regions of focus, objectives, key activities, lessons learned and insights. The profiles were validated by organizations.

⁶ Profiles are available on CCIC's website for download. See CCIC. 2019. Triangular Co-operation. <https://ccic.ca/triangular-co-operation/>

Findings

Awareness of triangular co-operation

A key finding of the research is that, as expected, Canadian CSOs are largely unaware of the new definition of triangular co-operation and the voluntary guidelines for effectiveness. Engagement with CCIC members and others throughout the research showed that most organizations are unaware that the definition has been updated. Engagement also showed a variety of perspectives on the definition of triangular co-operation.

Some participants did not fully comprehend the modality and roles involved, as well as the concept of equitable partnerships behind it. They believed it was simply new terminology for multiparty projects, not understanding that at the core of a project, there needed to be the inclusion of a Northern partner working with a Southern partner in implementing a project in a third partner country from the South. The roles of partners seemed vague particularly given that CSOs tend to play multiple roles in partnerships as both facilitators and implementers. Visuals and concrete examples assisted in making the concept clear. Upon clarification, organizations often advised that they did not in fact engage in triangular co-operation—as most projects were funded by GAC and implemented by their organization in targeted regions, without the inclusion of a partner outside the targeted region. Indeed, CCIC followed potential leads on projects with 26 organizations who thought that they participated in triangular co-operation to only later back out of the research once they fully understood the modality.

Another misconception that emerged in the research was the notion that triangular co-operation refers to a project implemented in three different countries by a Canadian CSO—noting rather just the inclusion of three partners, but not the specificity of the three roles in the modality. Throughout interviews, participants were asked if the GPI Voluntary Guidelines for Effective Triangular Co-operation informed their partnership approach. Participants noted they were not aware of the guidelines and that partnerships were based on needs or previous history with partners. Overall, however, participants expressed interest in the guidelines and advised they would be taken into consideration for future projects.

It became evident throughout calls and discussions that the horizontal relationships and balance of power that triangular co-operation entails were not yet grasped by some participants—traditional project planning and implementation and vertical relationships, were at the forefront of most projects analyzed and discussed, and to some extent were seen as simpler and easier to manage. Nevertheless, other participants seemed to understand that triangular co-operation allows for a shift in power from the facilitating partner, the Canadian CSOs, towards the pivotal and beneficiary partners. This gears projects more towards autonomy in decision-making, flexibility in implementation and improved results. At the workshop on triangular co-operation, some organizations indicated excitement regarding the possibility of triangular co-operation to facilitate more equitable partnerships (discussed further below).

Overall, the interviews and Summit workshop contributed to raising awareness of triangular co-operation. Discussions were inclusive of a variety of CSOs which enabled broader discussions on the topic and debate, contributing to improved understanding for participants unfamiliar with or distrusting of the notion of a “new” modality. General feedback following the workshop session was positive. Participants felt better equipped to recognize triangular co-operation, including within their own organization, its benefits and possibilities for engagement in the future.

CSO participation in triangular co-operation

Projects reviewed

The research found that a limited number of organizations that participate in triangular co-operation though unknowingly. A total of 16 triangular co-operation projects were identified from nine CSOs and one private sector partner. Annex 1 provides a summary of project details. As noted, project profiles contain individual project information that depict budget, partner roles, objectives, partnership, activities, results as well as insights and lessons learned.

In terms of regional distribution, 10 projects were based in Africa, four in Asia and two in South America. Sectors covered include agriculture (2), climate resilience (1), employment (1), finance (3), gender (3), health (4) and natural resource extraction (2). Twelve projects were funded by GAC while five were funded by others like the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Nations Development Programme. The size of the projects examined range from \$30,000 to \$80 million with a duration of one to seven years. Given the nature of the research, all projects included a Canadian partner as a facilitator, though the Canadian partner often also served as an implementing partner alongside pivotal partners.

Emerging approaches to triangular co-operation

The research team identified two approaches to triangular co-operation among Canadian partners. As shown in Table 1, projects can be categorized according to their focus and rationale for the use of triangular co-operation. The regional approach is characterized by projects that are being implemented in more than one country and make use of regional expertise. Projects that focus on South-South learning are dedicated to enabling learning between Southern partners with pivotal and beneficiary partners both benefitting from exchanges. For its part, the OECD (2019) identified five approaches to triangular co-operation characterized by the type of project involved. These include:

- *Standalone triangular co-operation projects*: These projects are new and aim to trial new concepts, processes and/or build new partnerships by putting strengths and experience of all partners to use.
- *Standalone triangular training activities*: These projects use of specific expertise of developing countries and regional experts through training, seminars and other exchanges.
- *Open competition for triangular project proposals*: These projects make financial resources available that are geared towards triangular co-operation specifically with calls for proposals within scope of triangular co-operation programs.
- *Scaling-up to triangular co-operation*: These projects apply successful practices of triangular co-operation experiences to other countries, regions or partners.
- *Triangular co-operation as a component of larger development co-operation programs*: In this case, triangular co-operation is mainstreamed into wider development co-operation programs.⁷

The projects identified through the research tend to focus on a regional or south-south learning approach while following at least one of the five categorizations in the OECD typography. Eleven of the projects examined fit within the regional approach while five follow a South-South learning approach.

Table 1 provides an overview of how the projects examined can be categorized according to their overall approach and the OECD typography, noting that the OECD categories are not mutually exclusive.

⁷ For a full review of the typology see OECD (2019, 42-64).

Projects most commonly included triangular co-operation as a component of a larger program (six projects) or a standalone project (six projects). Three projects were characterized as standalone training activities and three as scaling-up.

Table 1. Approaches to triangular co-operation		
Project	Approach	OECD categorization
ASSK — Centre for International Co-operation in Health and Development	South-South learning	Scaling-up
AQCESS — Aga Khan Foundation Canada	Regional approach	Component of a larger program
BEST Cassava—Mennonite Economic Development Associates	Regional approach	Standalone project
Training, communication, participation: Defending the rights of working women and young people of Central America—Alternatives	Regional approach	Standalone training activities
Empowerment of populations affected by extractive activities in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador—Alternatives	Regional approach	Standalone training activities
HAPA — Aga Khan Foundation Canada	Regional approach	Component of a larger program
IMPACT — Aga Khan Foundation Canada	Regional approach	Component of a larger program
IRFITCO — Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada	Regional approach	Standalone project
NHRA — Centre Canadien d'Étude et de Coopération Internationale	Regional approach	Standalone project
E-Joussour – Alternatives	Regional approach	Standalone project / scaling-up
PASIE — Cowater International	Regional approach	Component of a larger program
PLUVIF — Centre Canadien d'Étude et de Coopération Internationale	South-South learning	Standalone project
Proxfin—Développement international Desjardins	South-South learning	Standalone project
Scaling-Up Conservation Agriculture in East Africa—CFGB	Regional approach	Component of a larger program
Skills for Employability—AIMS—Next Einstein Initiative Foundation	South-South learning	Standalone training activities
RIMANSI — Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada	South-South learning	Scaling-up / component of a larger program

Regional approach

Triangular co-operation projects with regional dimensions tend to include multiple countries in a region or countries of close geographical proximity. In some cases, the regional dimension of triangular co-operation emerged as a result of a successful single-country project, such as the case of Centre for International Co-operation in Health and Development's ASSK in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). A previous project of Centre for International Co-operation in Health and Development in Mali led to scaling the Mali project to the DRC where needs were similar, the pivotal partner being from Mali.

A defining feature of regional approaches appears to be the inclusion of regional experts through institutions with a regional mandate such as the case in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank's Scaling-Up Conservation Agriculture in East Africa, Cowater International's PASIE project and the IRFITCO project by Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada. In the case of the projects implemented by the Aga Khan Foundation Canada, Southern expertise from pivotal partners in Pakistan and Kenya is supporting efforts in neighbouring countries as well as in selected countries in Africa.

South-South learning

While most projects, including those that adopt regional approaches, noted that learning occurs between North-South-South partners, the South-South learning approach is characterized by an emphasis on learning as part of project objectives. The South-South learning component enables learning from one project to be applied to another and/or favours knowledge and expertise sharing between southern countries. South-South learning projects encourage horizontal relationships in which partners are equally holding decision power with the facilitator providing support but not playing a central role. The approach favours the development of Southern countries' knowledge, credibility in a given subject matter and capacity development. In this sense, this approach to triangular co-operation ensures an emphasis on a strong partnership between facilitator, pivotal and beneficiary partners, a trend that runs counter to some approaches to triangular co-operation that emphasize the relationship between the facilitator and the pivotal partner and, de facto, a weaker role for the beneficiary partner (OECD 2019).

Multiple roles across approaches

What appears to be a defining feature of engagement by Canadian partners in triangular co-operation, regardless of the approach adopted, is that partners play multiple roles. Facilitating partners provide technical expertise and finance, but also carry out implementation activities alongside pivotal partners. Facilitators, pivotal partners and supposed beneficiaries often benefit from expertise through three-way



COWATER INTERNATIONAL: HARNESSING REGIONAL EXPERTISE

Enhancing Oversight of the Extractive Industry in Francophone Africa (PASIE) is an initiative to enhance public accountability and transparency in the extractive sector of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Madagascar and Mali. CREFIAF is a key anchor point for the project and the pivotal partner. CREFIAF is a professional network offering services geared towards auditing the extractive industries in sub-Saharan French-speaking Africa. It supports PASIE's coordinating efforts of the participating supreme auditing institutions. CREFIAF houses the project headquarters and local offices have been installed in each target country.

exchanges even when the pivotal partner has formal responsibility for implementation of certain activities. The relationships and roles are varied and sometimes interwoven denying an interpretation of triangular co-operation that sees the roles of facilitator, pivotal partner and beneficiary as mutually exclusive.

SOUTH-SOUTH LEARNING TRIANGULAR CO-OPERATION: EXPERIENCES FROM CCIC MEMBERS

Développement international Desjardins' Proxfin is an international network that brings together finance institutions from the global South and the organization's partners from all over the world. The network aims to promote communication and exchanges between member institutions, who share the same performance model and values, as well as to advance good practices in the area of community finance. Proxfin members serve as both pivotal partners with the clients of member institutions acting as beneficiaries. Développement international Desjardins provides guidance on financial best practices.

For Centre de coopération internationale en santé et développement, triangular co-operation characterized by South-South learning has included expert exchanges from one Southern country to another and vice versa to allow a real transfer of local expertise and complementary exchanges.

Equitable partnerships

A key finding that emerges from the research—both in interviews and discussions at the Summit workshop—is that CSOs see triangular co-operation as a path to equitable partnerships with Southern partners. The modality can foster horizontal relations between collaborators enabling complementarity between all types of contributions whether financial, knowledge, technical or human resources. In the view of some participants, traditional styles of partnerships do not always enable all partners to have equal say. Decisions are usually made from the top down and often not all partners' experience, knowledge and priorities are considered.

To leverage triangular co-operation to generate equitable partnerships, interviewees emphasized the importance of clarity in terms of entry points into partnership, comparative advantages and roles. Triangular co-operation is not only grounded in a recognition and valuing of the capacities of each partner, but also recognizes a division of labour, funding and accountability based on those capacities. CSOs highlighted the importance of shifting power to pivotal and beneficiary partners which they see as a positive and meaningful change in relationship-building with Southern partners. The emphasis in triangular co-operation on South-South interactions was appreciated by many, particularly in regional programming where training opportunities occur in a variety of countries and sometimes outside the “beneficiary” countries. This approach values and uplifts local expertise in ways that have potential to decolonize international development by transition from North-South information flows to South-South and North-South-South exchanges.

Participants witnessed the breaking of barriers to change in beneficiary countries with the inclusion of partners with similar objectives and cultures. At times, the inclusion of a pivotal partner provided a sense of impartiality within project implementation among project partners. For example, if a Canadian partner and beneficiary disagreed on an approach, the pivotal partner is often able to identify the middle ground and share a perspective that accommodates all partners. In this sense, a pivotal partner

does not only provide experience and expertise benefits, but also provides a middle mediating role, which allows fairer mitigation of operational challenges.

Achieving greater impact

Influencing policy

Projects that included a policy dimension showed the value of working through triangular co-operation to influence policies. Some Canadian partners noted that by working with partners that already have linkages to local governments or a keen understanding of local politics given geographic proximity, projects benefit from a greater ability to influence policymakers and in turn decision-making for the improvement of intended beneficiaries. For example, in its project with the African Conservation Tillage Network, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank found that was able to create a supportive policy and program environment for conservation agriculture by engaging local, regional and national government in the three project target countries. African Conservation Tillage Network's expertise in culturally relevant policy engagement in the region of the program was key to success. African Conservation Tillage Network not only successfully engaged with government but more importantly, advanced concerns and insights of farmers, further boosting the need for policy changes. African Conservation Tillage Network's access to local and regional specialists helped foster a movement towards more sustainable agricultural practices that continues to positively influence policies in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania and increases women and girls' access to household finances. In the case of Alternative's Empowerment of women and girls in the informal sector of Honduras and Nicaragua project, the organization partnered with Central de Unica dos trabalhadores, of Brazil, based on its extensive expertise in trade union and government interactions. Given its successful lobbying for the empowerment of women in the informal sector of Brazil and elsewhere in South America, Central de Unica dos trabalhadores was called in to assist in driving the same change in Honduras and Nicaragua through the development of communication materials geared towards decisionmakers in government and business.

Reaching targeted beneficiaries

Participants noted that in some contexts triangular co-operation is pursued out of necessity as the only possible way to implement a project, particularly to influence stakeholders or reach certain communities. Participants working in fragile contexts and conflict zones, such as Centre de coopération internationale en santé et développement, noted security challenges and difficulties in obtaining visas kept Canadian experts from wanting to travel to the project areas. This resulted in the need to look beyond Canadian expertise and identify local and regional expertise who would either be comfortable to work among the ongoing security threats and/or from a country in proximity not requiring lengthy visa applications. This challenge yielded positive results in the sense that a search for local and regional expertise enabled the formation of a pool of experts for future use. The Mennonite Economic Development Associates, for instance, also built local hiring into their project planning as a means to overcome security and bureaucratic challenges, while highlighting regional and local expertise.

Like the experience of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank noted above, Cowater International's project required triangular partnership to reach intended policymakers. The organization found that West African governments were more inclined to listen to the experience of CSOs in countries of geographical proximity—hence the partnerships with partners from a country other than the beneficiary country. In this sense, external expertise is valued, particularly when cultural and political similarities exist. The question of trust is less of a dilemma in these instances; it is rather whether a project applied in a similar country was successful and if it can indeed be duplicated given similarities at hand. Triangular co-operation is therefore a powerful tool in increasing the reach and impact of projects.

Similarly, throughout panel workshop discussions, it was noted that some political contexts mandate projects that include a partner that is in geographic proximity making triangular co-operation a requirement in development assistance for some countries while giving Canadian CSOs the opportunity to create relationships with a wider spectrum of local experts. One organization's project in Cuba, for instance, could only go forward if a partner from the Caribbean region was involved in implementation and service delivery.

Scaling success

Triangular co-operation has the ability to create momentum at the regional level towards progress on sustainable development. Aga Khan Foundation Canada's HAPA, IMPACT and AQCESS projects were the result of successful projects applied in one country and duplicated elsewhere. Centre de coopération internationale en santé et développement's ASSK took a similar approach. The Centre d'étude et de coopération internationale's PLUVIF project was and remains a strong driving force of action against sexual and gender-based violence in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Working with numerous pivotal partners, the awareness-raising component of the project to promote behaviour change through a variety of means such as the use of radio and the sharing of testimonies from women and men helped propagate in beneficiary countries but also beyond their borders. Participants in the project expect that the expertise and knowledge gained from this project will be used to drive the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence further with innovations and good practices applied in similar contexts in the future.

Challenges of triangular co-operation

Participants in the research highlighted many advantages related to triangular co-operation, particularly in terms of developing equitable partnerships and realizing impact. They also pointed to challenges, notably with respect to the management of more complicated partnerships.

Relationship-building

The research team frequently heard CSOs express the need to build relations and establish coordination measures with all partners involved. In the case of Aga Khan foundation Canada, the first year of AQCESS was determined to be a period of experimentation in determining the frequency and timing required of service delivery and the roles and requirements of partners in the implementation of services. The following annual project plans were improved thanks to the lessons learned during the first phase, efforts to build relationships and the achievement of goals. Others, such as the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada, highlighted that triangular co-operation emerged from existing long-standing relationships that facilitated partnership.

Relationship-building is an obvious first step in the pursuit of any partnership, including in triangular co-operation. Interviewees emphasized, however, that, where existing relationships do not exist, building trust and understanding with a potential partner is time-consuming. The amount of time needed is often underestimated. Building relationships with governments generally took longer than anticipated and this time was not necessarily included or accounted for in project work plans. Developing effective ways of working between facilitating, pivotal and beneficiary partners also needs to be considered in workplans. Work plans should allow for partners to co-determine service delivery and priorities. Space should be created for partners to communicate regularly and assess their partnership, including in support of an effective division of labour and shared accountability.

Ensuring shared expectations

Defining project expectations from the very beginning was another challenge that CSOs shared. Related to creating space for relationship development and partnership management, organizations found that expectations must be explicit up front particularly when defining roles and responsibilities. Without shared expectations, as projects progress over time, communication can become unclear and tensions emerge. In its first year, the Co-operative Development Fund Canada's IRFITCO project suffered from a lack of clear expectations between the donor and partners. This necessitated more frequent calls, reviews and work plan adjustments with the back and forth resulting in some complications, tensions and lost time. Challenges that arose could have been avoided with more time spent identifying expectations in the creation of the work plan prior to implementation.

Language barriers

Participants also noted language barriers as an ongoing challenge in project implementation. For Alternatives, although translators are present on a needs-basis, delays in communication, whether in writing or in person, slowed down processes and in some cases did not transmit messages correctly or adequately. The Aga Khan Foundation Canada also noted that it regularly includes English language instruction for the participants it supports in Southern-led training opportunities in locations where the native language differs between pivotal partners and beneficiaries to ensure effective communication.

Higher transaction costs

Some participants perceive triangular co-operation as having higher costs than other types of development co-operation. They felt that with more varied partners involved, challenges related to relationships, cost-sharing, financing and logistics increase owing to greater complexity. In their view, this can result in more time spent on managing human resources rather than actually implementing project components. Another challenge in triangular co-operation is that not all costs are measurable. Defining transaction costs arose as a point of tension in terms of whether to engage or in triangular co-operation or not. Organizations cannot always define what costs of triangular co-operation are nor agree on the extent to which any given project-related activity consisted of a cost, per se. The OECD's 2019 review similarly found that practitioners do not always agree on what should be counted as a transaction cost, rather than an investment in relationships that is the real value of a triangular approach.

Overall, interviewees and participants at the Summit workshop seemed to share the consensus that when more partners are involved, more external factors come into play, increasing the risk of higher transaction costs. Nevertheless, it is also worth highlighting that not all interviewees emphasized transaction costs to the same extent. Practitioners of triangular co-operation noted that operational challenges were more than manageable when clear objectives, deadlines and lines of accountability were set with all parties involved, while maintaining regular channels of communication open at all times—all requirements of day-to-day project management. Indeed, according to the OECD, a more nuanced view of transaction costs sees time spent in building and maintaining relationships that will lead to greater efficiencies and results later. Based on interviews with 43 individuals and a desk-based review of literature, projects and evaluations, the study found that triangular co-operation does not necessarily have higher costs than other modalities. Rather, transaction costs depend on the type of project and partners involved and whether there is a need for initial investments to build relationships, clarify roles and develop trust—all of which contribute to the overall success of partnerships.

Coordination

A view of one interviewee is that Canadian CSOs are not always coordinated with ongoing or upcoming in-country programming. The interviewee argued that CSOs should do a better job of reviewing country contexts in design phases to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize synergies with additional partnerships or efforts to increase scope.

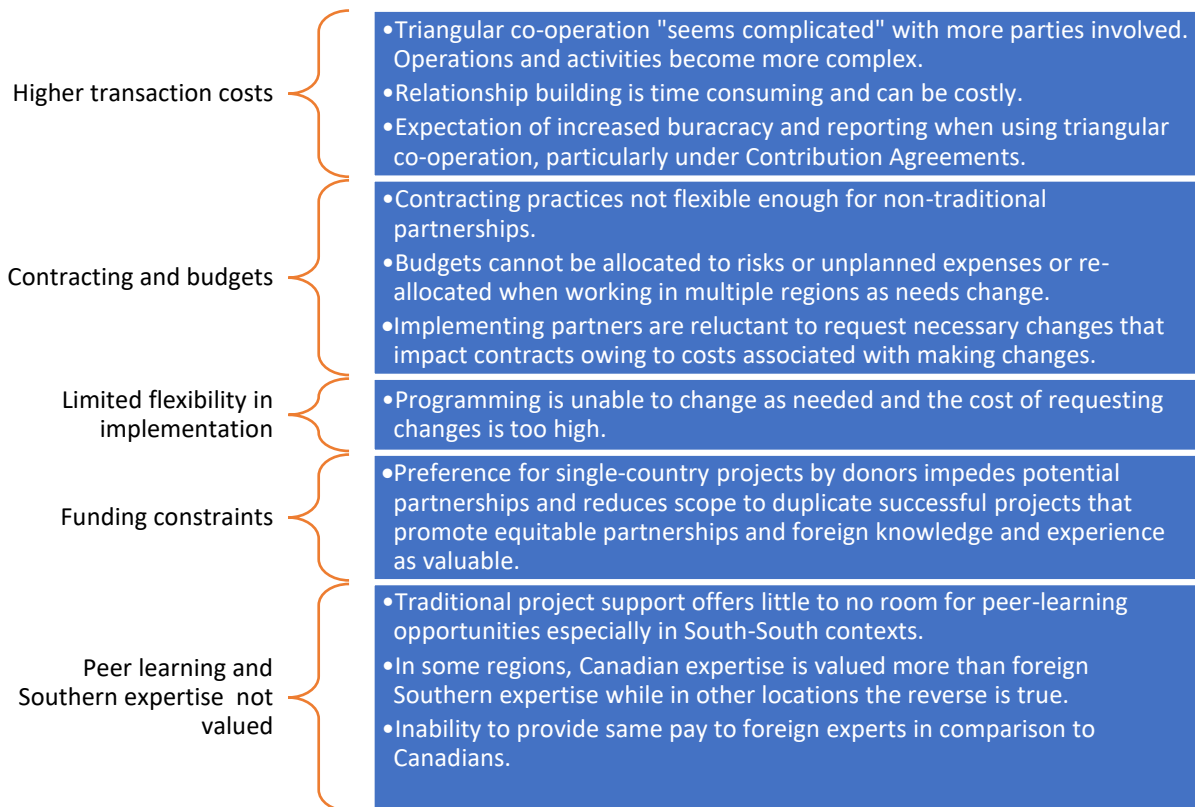
Employee incentives and allowances

Closely tied to the need for experts in the field as highlighted above is the challenge of allowances and incentives for staff. Canadian partners noted that the difference between Canadian staff and partner staff incentives and allowances was noticeable and a source of tension and frequent turnover. CSOs also noted that this challenge can be worsened when limited project budget allocations for staff salaries are in competition with other projects also searching for the best talent in targeted regions. Participants in the research concluded that incentives and allowances provided by Canadian partners are not up to the standards of CSOs worldwide.

Views from CSOs that do not engage in triangular co-operation

In addition to inputs from CSOs participating in triangular co-operation, those that do not shared what they see as hindrances and misconceptions, shedding light on areas where progress may be needed to promote greater use of the modality (Figure 2). Overall, organizations that do not participate in triangular co-operation pointed to transaction costs (similar to the issues noted above), contracting practices, lack of flexibility in project implementation and limited funding available for regionally focused initiatives.

Figure 2. Barriers to triangular co-operation according to organizations not engaging the modality



Role of GAC in supporting triangular co-operation

The research team found that experiences with GAC-funded projects that support triangular co-operation varied a great deal in terms of perspectives from Canadian partners and the three GAC project officers interviewed for the research. The section that follows highlights the views shared by partners and GAC staff with respect to contracting arrangements, reporting guidelines and overall approaches to triangular co-operation by GAC.

Existing mechanisms to fund triangular co-operation

Many participants in the research pointed to Contribution Agreements as ill-suited for triangular co-operation projects. Individuals argued that grants were better suited for projects that include a multitude of actors and to maximization benefits for all. Participants advised that Contribution Agreements do not allow for the addition of pivotal partners when opportunities arise throughout the course of implementation. The inability to include new partners as projects move forward reduces potential positive outcomes and impedes Canadian CSOs from gaining relationships and experience valuable in whichever subject matter they work in. Participants noted that if contracts were more supportive of flexibility, triangular co-operation projects would increase in volume and in scope as Canadian partners could further mobilize their networks and local expertise, harnessing entry points for scaling-up projects.

Funding equitable partnerships

Participants in the research noted that current funding and contracting arrangements are not in favour of equitable partnerships. With the Canadian partner, as the contract-holder, local partners, both pivotal and beneficiary, tend to be treated as consultants rather than active fully-fledged partners in a project. Some organizations argued it is difficult to get project funding approvals if a non-Canadian partner leads decision-making. These issues undermine the value and expertise of pivotal partners and impact the power dynamics in project relationships. There is a need to identify concrete ways to harness one of the advantages of triangular co-operation—its role in encouraging shared ownership of a project and trust between partners. Building ownership and trust among partners is central for the success of a project as well as sustainability.

Supporting regional efforts

Participants expressed concern with what seems to be an emerging trend in terms of preference for single-country projects by donors and GAC. CSOs felt this trend not only impedes potential partners, the regional experts, from gaining credibility beyond their borders, but also reduces significantly the value, recognition and duplication of successful projects that promote and value equitable partnerships and foreign knowledge and experience.

Reporting guidelines

The topic of fine-tuning reporting guidelines and requirements was also raised in interviews. Participants felt that although reporting was quite burdensome depending on the project, the required content of reports could and should be geared towards self-evaluation of partners in addition to presenting project activities and progress to GAC. Participants felt that reporting should include performance indicators on the partnership as well as the outcomes.

Investing in triangular-co-operation: Mixed views

The OECD (2019) highlights the need for partners to establish an ecosystem supportive of triangular co-operation. It points to overarching, politically supported narratives (and related legislation), institutional structures, diverse partnerships and resources and procedures to guide interventions. In sum, increasing triangular co-operation requires an enabling environment embedded in overall development co-operation ecosystems that focus on partnerships rather than project or programs.

In the Canadian context, participants questioned whether triangular co-operation as a modality, portrayed as successful and beneficial, would be sustainable and a lasting way to partner supported by GAC project requirements and implementation mechanisms. Some interviewees saw the modality as a trend that will eventually disappear if it remains unused and unpopular given lack of awareness, limitations resulting from contractual requirements and the lack of dedicated resources to support triangular co-operation including operational guidelines and funding windows.

The views of civil society varied in terms of how GAC should further support triangular co-operation. On one hand, some interviewees argued for GAC to provide greater clarity on the term “triangular co-operation” and mainstream the modality into policies, regulations, funding opportunities and contracting regulations and requirements. Clarity on the terminology and further efforts to raise awareness of the modality can foster shared efforts towards the achievement of development goals in partner countries and provide a basis to improve the effectiveness of triangular co-operation through exchanges of knowledge and expertise. Providing support for triangular co-operation through funding opportunities would help build the linkages necessary for Canada to gain more credibility as a supporter of triangular co-operation and to promote greater engagement by Canadian partners. Support could also exist for the process of relationship building with all partners or through continued support as projects and partnership evolve, including those that move from traditional North-South partnerships to North-South-South models. Indeed, some participants looked forward to potential funding geared towards this style of partnerships, voicing that the modality has a future in development co-operation considering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and increasing capacity across the Global South.

On the other hand, some participants in the research questioned the value of prioritizing a focus on partnerships rather than results. These stakeholders raised concerns that Canadian CSOs would likely start to apply for funding based on developing triangular partnerships rather than reaching tangible and sustainable results depending on how GAC increases its support for triangular co-operation. Participants feared funding for single-country projects would decrease as a result of preferences for triangular co-operation projects, and subsequently, that new partnership requirements would not be feasible for smaller-scale CSOs with smaller scopes, mandates and networking reach.

Lessons Learned

Triangular co-operation opens up new ways of working and avenues for partnership.

The projects reviewed as part of this study showcased a diverse range of pivotal partners. The inclusion of partners outside of Canada offers possibilities for exploring new relationships in development assistance. New perspectives and the introduction to new solutions for project delivery contributes to increased capacities of all partners, identification of locally relevant solutions and support for and recognition of Southern expertise.

Triangular co-operation is a useful approach to establishing more equitable partnerships in development co-operation.

Triangular co-operation can usefully harness and enable increased capacity in partner countries. It has potential to shift power dynamics between partners through a recognition of the comparative advantages and capacities of partners. Some participants argued that triangular co-operation decolonizes development assistance by shifting the focus and power from Northern partners to Southern partners. Traditional projects are geared towards Northern expertise and knowledge while triangular co-operation supports the growth and dissemination of Southern countries' experiences and know-how, while shedding light on South-South co-operation efforts.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to triangular co-operation. Partnerships vary and partners can play many roles.

Reviewed projects took one of two main approaches to triangular co-operation—regional approaches and approaches focused on South-South learning. In this context the motivations for triangular co-operation varied and the roles played by facilitating, pivotal and beneficiary partners often overlapped in complementary ways, including in terms of direct project implementation. Projects showed a range of mandates, programming focus, timelines and budget sizes. The way Canadian partners engage in triangular co-operation is highly dependent on the environments and contexts within which they work. While this reality complicates understandings of triangular co-operation, findings also illustrate the richness of the partnership models examined in which Northern and Southern partners are working to share roles and implementation activities through more equitable partnership models.

As with all partnerships, effective triangular co-operation requires trust, shared objectives, defined and managed expectations among partners, clearly established roles, flexibility and mechanisms for effective communication and accountability between partners.

While some perceive the modality as more cumbersome, the experience of Canadian partners suggests that the challenges of triangular partnerships are not so different from other types of partnerships. Triangular co-operation requires appropriate project planning to consider potential time required for the mitigation of risks and shifts in programming. It must be grounded in trust, transparency and mutual accountability.

The relationship-building phase in triangular co-operation is critical to fulfill project objectives.

Participants felt that current project contracting mechanisms left little to no room to formulate and develop relationships with partners as well as anticipate or manage uncertainties that come with an equitable approach to project inception, implementation and closure. An initial phase dedicated to relationship-building prior to operationalization is critical for project sustainability.

Defining and measuring transaction costs of triangular co-operation remains a challenge.

An ongoing preoccupation of CSOs, both those that do and do not practice triangular co-operation, is that the modality has higher transaction costs that are not always measurable. Nevertheless, experiences have shown that working with greater partners is not unmanageable and that triangular co-operation can reduce costs, such as those related to travel for example.

Triangular co-operation projects can serve as an effective approach to realize and scale development impact.

Pivotal partners enable greater reach with respect to target beneficiaries and promoting successful policy change. Moreover, triangular co-operation offers a means to transition relationships with beneficiaries of development co-operation into pivotal partners to scale solutions at a regional level, recognizing improved capacities and Southern expertise. Finally, as noted above, triangular co-operation can be an effective means to deal with development assistance in fragile contexts and conflict zones that lifts up the regional expertise of pivotal partners.

To be effective, triangular co-operation projects require greater flexibility.

Some funders have not shifted their approaches towards one that values triangular co-operation. Contracting and workplan guidelines impede changes or shifts in programming. More flexible contracts would facilitate innovative and cost-effective solutions to overcome development challenges when the needs arise. Participants voiced that grants may be more adequately suited and conducive for triangular co-operation in comparison to current mechanisms of contribution agreements.

Conclusions

Triangular co-operation is a modality that encompasses knowledge and expertise sharing, while encouraging innovation and co-creation through mutual learning for mutual benefits. The new definition of triangular co-operation seeks to not only outline the roles and partnerships among actors involved, but also emphasizes equitable partnerships to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. The versatility of triangular co-operation responds well to the intricacies and challenges offered by the SDGs and rising capacity in the Global South. Triangular co-operation is the art of partnership-building. There is no one-size-fits all approach.

This research project aimed to raise awareness of triangular co-operation among CSOs, support efforts to strengthen GAC's understanding of Canadian experience with triangular co-operation and generate greater understanding of opportunities for increased triangular co-operation with and by Canadian CSOs.

Canada is well-positioned to increase its support participation by Canadian organizations in triangular co-operation. Overall, the focus on equitable partnerships with Southern organizations through triangular co-operation aligns with Canada's ambitions to support local CSOs, including women's rights organizations. Canada's *Policy for Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance—A Feminist Approach*⁸ is also an important entry point for highlighting the value of triangular co-operation. Participants in the research are eager to be recognized as leaders in spearheading triangular co-operation and the benefits that arise from such projects. Through existing policies, GAC has an opportunity to encourage and support Canadian CSOs. The objectives of the *Feminist International Assistance Policy* and the *Policy for Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance—A Feminist Approach* reflect the Guidelines for Effective Triangular Co-operation as well as critical areas where progress is needed to promote triangular co-operation according to participants in the research. Organizations desire more support, independence and leadership, flexibility in funding mechanisms, clear guidelines and opportunities through multi-stakeholder initiatives. They value opportunities for transparent and accountable triangular co-operation that delivers results.

Recommendations

Three key recommendations for GAC emerge to further support triangular co-operation among Canadian partners.

- **Invest in raising awareness of the benefits of triangular co-operation among Canadian partners.**

While engagement with CCIC members and others throughout the research raised awareness of triangular co-operation, additional efforts are likely needed to increase understanding of the modality and its benefits. Aspects of triangular co-operation that align well with the priorities of Canadian CSO partners include its emphasis on existing Southern capacities, promotion of equitable partnerships and potential to shift power relations. In addition to making information on triangular co-operation, its benefits and Canada's role in the GPI more widely available, GAC's partners value opportunities for dialogue. Discussions on triangular co-operation could be included as part of existing dialogue mechanisms, such as those related to the *Policy for Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance—A Feminist Approach*. Other opportunities for dialogue also exist, such as ad hoc events, or engagement with the Task Team for CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment that could help to further socialize the modality and its benefits among Canadian partners.

- **Provide guidance to Canadian partners on GAC's approach to triangular co-operation and mainstream the approach as relevant into policies, funding mechanisms and reporting guidelines.**

The research project raised interest among Canadian partners in the opportunities presented by triangular co-operation. At the same time, uncertainty remains regarding GAC's plans with respect to supporting triangular co-operation and concrete entry points for Canadian partners. Moreover, a range of challenges related to funding, contracts and reporting were flagged throughout the research. While not currently a part of the *Policy for Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance—A Feminist Approach* or its implementation plan, addressing challenges in triangular co-operation could be part of

⁸ Government of Canada. 2020. Canada's Policy for Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance—A Feminist Approach. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/civil_policy-politique_civile.aspx?lang=eng.

efforts to make progress under objectives 4 (foster CSO leadership in innovation), 5 (CSOs as independent actors), 6 (funding mechanisms), 7 (foster multi-stakeholder approaches) and 9 (promote sustainability, transparency, accountability and results) of the policy.

- **Build stronger relationships with CSOs practicing and interested in triangular co-operation by creating space for exchange of good practices and lessons learned.**

This research project served as a much needed first step in establishing a baseline of how Canadian CSOs engage in triangular co-operation. The project raised interest among Canadian CSOs in the modality. Equipped with initial research findings and stakeholders willing to learn and share, there is an opportunity for GAC to ramp up its engagement with Canadian partners on triangular co-operation. By creating a safe and dedicated space for Canadian organizations to work, discuss, exchange and more importantly share, GAC can continue to support the efforts of Canadian organizations to engage in triangular co-operation and ensure the department's approach is informed by the experiences of its partners.

Annex 1: Summary of Projects Reviewed

Table 1. Triangular co-operation projects by sector			
Project	Pivotal	Beneficiary	Project Description
Agriculture			
BEST Cassava			This five-year, \$12 million project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation aims to establish a commercialized cassava seed system that is institutionalized and has the capacity for optimal expansion. Project activities include use of superior cassava varieties, assisting in private-sector and government relationship-building and training.
Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA)	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Nigeria	Tanzania	
Scaling-Up Conservation Agriculture in East Africa			This five-year, \$18.6 million project seeks to enable conservation agriculture practices for smallholder farmers in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. The project aims to create a supportive policy and program environment for conservation agriculture by engaging local, regional and national government officials across the three countries. Project activities include training and workshops, provision of extension support, development of a conservation agriculture curriculum and radio broadcasting content and the establishment of savings groups.
Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB)	African Conservation Tillage Network (ACT), Kenya	Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania	
Climate resilience			
Nepal Hazard Risk Assessment (NHRA)			Carried out over 2009–2010, this one-year, \$200,000 project aimed to develop a synthesis report of Nepal's major hazard risks at the national and sub-national levels, present an overview of vulnerability assessment for the country and develop detailed economic analysis using loss probability modelling of the country's risks with projected economic losses from forecasted hazards, and map high-risk geographic regions.
Centre Canadien d'Étude et de Coopération Internationale (CECI)	Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC), Thailand	Nepal	
Employment			
Skills for Employability			This five-year, \$6.5 million project aims to meet the demands of knowledge-based industries through the provision of highly skilled training and support for the transition to work for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) scholars and students in Cameroon, Rwanda and Senegal. Project activities include business internships, online learning modules, industry focused forums, strategic partnerships with academic institutions and mentorship opportunities.
AIMS — Next Einstein Initiative Foundation	Southern African Society for Cooperative Education (SASCE), South Africa	Africa region	

Table 1. Triangular co-operation projects by sector			
Project	Pivotal	Beneficiary	Project Description
Finance			
Expanding the Reach of Micro-Insurance in South East Asia (RIMANSI)			Carried out between 2003 and 2015, this 12-year, \$1.7 million project aimed to deepen and widen the scope of outreach, service delivery, efficiency and competitiveness of a network of 25 Micro-insurance Mutual Benefit Associations (MBAs) in Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam. Project activities include professional training and workshops, technical assistance, development of policy and procedure manuals, registration and licensing of new MBAs and microinsurance programs and performance management assistance.
Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada (CDF Canada)	CARD Mutual Benefit Association, Philippines	Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam	
Improving Rural Financial Inclusion Through Cooperatives (IRFITCO)			This four-year, \$3.2 million project seeks to improve the financial inclusion of the rural poor in Ethiopia, Malawi and Tanzania through strengthened financial cooperative networks. Project activities include training, support of national ethics organizations, service delivery and engagement of government in the development and diffusion of workshops, trainings and exchange visits, in order to reach the rural poor.
Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada (CDF Canada)	African Confederation of Savings and Credit Co-operative Associations (ACCOSCA), Kenya	Ethiopia, Malawi and Tanzania	
Proxfin			
Développement international Desjardins (DID)	26 microfinance institutions, members of Proxfin	Clients of the 26-member institutions	A long-term initiative from 2006 until present day, the Proxfin association aims to facilitate and promote the sharing of experience between Southern countries and DID, related to microfinance. Between its inception and 2015, Proxfin was co-funded by GAC, with the objective of becoming a financially autonomous association, by 2025. As of 2019, its members finance close to 75% of its operations, while DID covers the remaining 25%. Following successful exchanges between partner institutions, assessments and diagnosis of client protection practices activities now consist of a large, annual technical seminar during which member financial institutions meet to discuss topics related to inclusive finance.
Gender			
Combatting Violence Against Girls and Young Women in the Great Lakes Region (PLUVIF)			This seven-year, \$13 million project aimed to engage local CSOs, communities and policymakers to act against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in all levels of society in Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Project activities include the development and implementation of protocols for assisting victims, community awareness-raising and education through training, and political dialogue.
Centre Canadien d'Étude et de Coopération Internationale (CECI)	Concertation des collectifs des associations féminines de la région des Grands lacs	Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda	

Table 1. Triangular co-operation projects by sector			
Project	Pivotal	Beneficiary	Project Description
	(COCAFEM/GL), Burundi		
Networking for women's rights and democratisation in the Middle East and North Africa (E-Joussour)			This six-year project seeks to strengthen the role, representation and co-operation of women's organizations in the Middle East and North Africa region and improve public understanding of the concepts of gender, equality and women's rights, through better gender analysis on human rights violations and conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa region. Project activities include publications to promote gender equality, an advocacy training guide, regional capacity building seminars, campaigning and lobbying guidelines and internship opportunities.
Alternatives	Forum des Alternatives Maroc (FMAS), Morocco	Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen	
Training, communication, participation: Defending the rights of working women and young people of Central America			This five-year, \$815 000 project aimed to improve the living conditions of women and young workers in the maquiladoras industry of the textile sector of Honduras and Nicaragua. Project activities include training and workshops, recruitment, annual campaigns, development of training materials relation to workers' rights and international seminars on women's rights.
Alternatives	Central de Unica dos trabalhadores (CUT), Brasil	Honduras and Nicaragua	
Health			
Access to Quality Care through Extending and Strengthening Health Systems (AQCESS)			This four-year, \$30.5 million project aims to improve mothers, newborns and children health (MNCH) in selected regions of Mali, Mozambique, Kenya and Pakistan. Project activities include equipping and upgrading health facilities, facilitating outreach campaigns and training facility-based health workers and health care managers as well as mobilizing and engaging stakeholders.
Agha Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC)	Aga Khan University, East Africa, Kenya	Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, and Pakistan	
Health Action Plan for Afghanistan (HAPA)			This five-year, \$75.2 million project aims to improve the health status of the population in selected provinces of Afghanistan, with a focus on women and children. Project activities include training of nurses, midwives and allied health workers as well as in-service training of nurses, midwives, physicians, lab technicians, health managers and government staff.
Agha Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC)	Aga Khan University and Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, Pakistan	Afghanistan	
Access to Reproductive, Maternal and Newborn Health in Mwanza, Tanzania (IMPACT)			This four-year, \$14.7 million project aims to improve reproductive, maternal and newborn health (RMNH) outcomes through a comprehensive health system strengthening approach in Tanzania. Project activities include repairing, upgrading and equipping public health facilities, training and supportive supervision and mobilizing and empowering communities to promote
Agha Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC)	Aga Khan University, East Africa, Kenya	Tanzania	

Table 1. Triangular co-operation projects by sector			
Project	Pivotal	Beneficiary	Project Description
			and practice healthy behaviours that support positive health outcomes and advance gender equality.
Access to Health Services in Kinshasa (ASSK)			This five-year, \$19 million project aims to improve the health of women, children and adolescents living in the province of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Project activities include health services delivery, training on biomedical waste disposal, improvement of health infrastructure and governance strengthening for health services management.
Centre for International Co-operation in Health and Development (CCISD)	Associations de santé communautaire (ASACO) de Kayes, Ségou, Mali	Democratic Republic of the Congo	
Natural resource extraction			
Empowerment of populations affected by extractive activities in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador			This four-year, \$600 000 project aimed to improve advocacy for the economic, social, cultural and environmental rights of populations affected by extractive industries and strengthening of sovereignty in the management and protection of natural resources and development of communities in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Project activities include advocacy training activities, establishment of local funding for small initiatives for human rights defenders, awareness campaigns on the impact of extractivism and consultations with communities affected by the extractive industry.
Alternatives	Central de Unica dos trabalhadores (CUT), Brasil	El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua	
Enhancing Oversight of the Extractive Industry in Francophone Africa (PASIE)			This six-year, \$18 million project aims to enhance public accountability and transparency in the extractive sector in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa, more specifically, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Mali and Cameroon. Project activities include the development of extractive industry audit guidelines, training curricula and other technical resources, pilot audits to test guidelines and technical resources, audit training and the development of guidelines and processes for stakeholder engagement.
Cowater International	Conseil régional de formation des institutions supérieures de contrôle des finances publiques de l'Afrique francophone subsaharienne (CREFI AF), Cameroon	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Madagascar, and Mali	

Annex 2: Research Approach

Triangular co-operation research schedule

October 2019

- Selection of 66 CCIC members with overseas programming who may engage in triangular co-operation
- Data collection through review of organization's websites for relevant projects and project information
- Publication of triangular co-operation webpage and member engagement through newsletter and direct members only newsletter
- Interviews began based on agreed questionnaire (see below) and project profile template

November 2019

- Outreach to CCIC member organizations according to probable engagement in triangular co-operation categorized as:
 - 1 = Yes, engages in the modality
 - 2 = May engage in the modality/website information unclear
 - 3 = No signs of modality
- Extensive email and direct member engagement begins
- Phone interviews continue
- Summit workshop on triangular co-operation—November 27, 2019

December—January 2019

- Ongoing exchanges between members and research team for project information, as needed
- Interviews continue
- Submission of profiles to members to review/approval

February 2020

- Ongoing exchanges between members and research team for project information, as needed
- Interviews continue
- Submission of profiles to members to review/approval
- Interviews with GAC Project Officers carried out based on semi-structured interview guide (questionnaire) for GAC Project officers (see below)

Semi-structured interview guides

Triangular Co-operation Semi-Structured Interview Guide

CCIC is carrying out a research project in partnership with Global Affairs Canada on [Triangular Co-operation](#). Triangular co-operation refers to projects that combine north-south and south-south cooperation involving any type of stakeholder (government, civil society, private sector, etc.) For example, triangular co-operation refers to instances when a northern organization (such as a Canadian civil society organization) partners with an organization from an emerging or developing country (e.g. private firm or other stakeholder in Kenya) to deliver a project in another country (e.g. deliver women's economic empowerment programming in Ethiopia).

CCIC is reaching out to its members and others to gauge interest in showcasing projects that practice triangular co-operation. To know more about triangular co-operation, watch [Global Partnership Initiative \(GPI\)'s video](#) or visit CCIC's [triangular co-operation](#) webpage.

Our phone calls with member and other stakeholders will focus on the questions and topics below. The research team will make use of existing documentation and publicly available information to prepare project templates with interviews focusing largely on opportunities, challenges and insights. It is expected that basic project information will be largely drawn from existing written information.

- Project name, location, budget, resource providers (funding), and project period (years or start and end date or anticipated end date)
- Names and type of partners involved (country, international organizations, civil society organizations, academia etc.)
- Roles of partners (this will help with the identification of beneficiary, pivotal, and facilitating partners, as per triangular co-operation criteria/definition as well as other relevant implementing) and did these shift over the course of the project?
- Project description
- Project activities having occurred/that will occur
- Results/impacts or anticipated/to date results/impacts
- Reasoning for choosing triangular co-operation to achieve or seek to achieve project objective(s)
- Why did you choose a Southern implementing partner from outside the beneficiary country over a Canadian or local partner?
- In your experience, has triangular cooperation been more/less cost effective in delivering development assistance?
- What are the challenges or limitations that hinder this type of collaboration?
- Overall, what are the opportunities offered by this kind of cooperation (both during and beyond the life of the project) compared to other forms of development cooperation?
- Insights (Key things you've learned/would do differently in the future?)
- In your opinion, what are the challenges within Canadian funded projects bringing in an implementing partner from elsewhere to then deliver the services in another country? Triangular cooperation builds on the complementary strengths of different actors to find innovative and cost-effective, flexible, context specific solutions to development challenges. Can you tell us about dialogues and communication between partners in the project, in terms of sharing commitments, inclusivity, ownership of the task at hand and overall accountability? What could have been done better (if anything)?
- How much innovation and/or co-creation did the project and its process involve—if any?
- Did the project enable joint-learning and knowledge-sharing?
- Does the project have a gender lens? If not, do you foresee its inclusion in future phases of the project or future projects of the same nature?
- Would you say the “leaving no one behind” pledge was kept in mind within the project?

Triangular Co-operation Semi-Structured Interview Guide—GAC Project Officers

CCIC is carrying out a research project in partnership with Global Affairs Canada on [Triangular Co-operation](#). Triangular co-operation refers to projects that combine north-south and south-south cooperation involving any type of stakeholder (government, civil society, private sector, etc.) For example, triangular co-operation refers to instances when a northern organization (such as a Canadian civil society organization) partners with an organization from an emerging or developing country (e.g. private firm or other stakeholder in Kenya) to deliver a project in another country (e.g. deliver women’s economic empowerment programming in Ethiopia).

CCIC is reaching out to its members and others to gauge interest in showcasing projects that practice triangular co-operation. To know more about triangular co-operation, watch [Global Partnership Initiative \(GPI\)’s video](#) or visit CCIC’s [triangular co-operation](#) webpage.

Our phone calls with GAC Project Officers will focus on the questions and topics below. The research team will make use of existing documentation and publicly available information to prepare project templates with interviews focusing largely on opportunities, challenges and insights of the triangular co-operation modality.

- Can you tell us about your overall experience in the project—were you familiar with partners? Were roles of partners clear? Did these shift over the course of the project?
- In your experience, has triangular cooperation been more/less cost effective in delivering development assistance within the context of this project?
- What are the challenges or limitations that hinder this type of collaboration, if any?
- Overall, what are the opportunities offered by this kind of cooperation (both during and beyond the life of the project) compared to other forms of development cooperation?
- Insights (Key things you’ve learned/would do differently in the future?)
- In your opinion, what are the challenges within Canadian funded projects bringing in an implementing partner from elsewhere to then deliver the services in another country? Triangular cooperation builds on the complementary strengths of different actors to find innovative and cost-effective, flexible, context specific solutions to development challenges.
- Can you tell us about dialogues and communication between yourself and the partners in the project? In terms of sharing commitments, inclusivity, ownership of the task at hand and overall accountability? What could have been done better (if anything)?
- How much innovation and/or co-creation did the project and its process involve – if any?
- Did the project enable joint-learning and knowledge-sharing?
- Does the project have a gender lens? If not, do you foresee its inclusion in future phases of the project or future projects of the same nature? Do you see a gender lens as something mandatory in the years ahead?
- Would you say the “[leaving no one behind](#)” pledge was kept in mind within the project?