A Collaborative Approach to Protecting the Ocean Environment

Professor Paul Szwed[1], Director Carleen Lyden-Kluss[2], Associate Professor Matthew Rooks[3]

1. Massachusetts Maritime Academy, pszwed@maritime.edu,
100 Academy Drive, Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, 02532 USA
2. North American Marine Environmental Protection Association (executivedirector@namepa.net)
3. Graduate School of Maritime Science, Kobe University (koberooks@gmail.com)

Abstract Oceans, often thought of as our last global commons, serve many important roles from providing us food and resources to connecting nations for trade. Despite this role of importance, our seas are becoming increasingly stressed. Addressing such issues of the common requires a collaborative international approach, as evidenced by the United Nations sustainable development goal 14 to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources" [1]. Further, the IAMU recognizes the importance of this aspect of their mission as evidenced by the Tasmanian Statement [2] and also by the theme of their 2016 annual general assembly calling for submissions about "strengthening cooperation for protection of the ocean environment" [3]. Using the collaborative value creation (CVC) framework [4, 5], this paper describes how IAMU might form a partnership with various INTERMEPA (the International Marine Environmental Protection Association) member associations to jointly advance their mutual shared mission to "save our seas" [6]. Using the CVC framework, this paper will describe a pathway for partner selection, partnership implementation, design and operations, and institutionalization. Building upon the foundation of success experienced by NAMEPA (the North American MEPA), this paper will also explore the opportunity to utilize IAMU member network connections to fulfil a critical objective listed under the Tasmanian Statement and create a new MEPA chapter in Japan (NIPPONMEPA) as a case study using the CVC framework. Proposed activities will likely include identified effective practices and may include new innovations such as joint events conducted virtually using the MIX methodology [7].

Keywords: Cooperation, Partnership, Protection of Maritime Environment, Oceans, Sustainability.

1. Introduction

Oceans, often thought of as our last global commons, serve many important roles from providing us food and resources to connecting nations for trade. Despite this role of importance, our seas are becoming increasingly stressed. Addressing such issues of the common requires a collaborative international approach, as evidenced by the United Nations sustainable development goal 14 to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources" [1]. Further, the IAMU recognizes the importance of this aspect of their mission as evidenced by the Tasmanian Statement [2] and also by the theme of their 2016 annual general assembly calling for submissions about "strengthening cooperation for protection of the ocean environment" [3]. This article will examine how two non-profit organizations can form a partnership using a "top-down" collaborative value creation framework and "bottom-up" chapter-first approach to address the continuing challenge of protecting or marine environment – to "save our seas".

1.1 International Marine Environmental Protection Association

[8] The International Marine Environmental Protection Association (MEPA) movement began in 1983 with the formation of Hellenic MEPA (HELMEPA) in Greece by shipowner George P. Livanos. Since that initial chapter began more than three decades ago, six more MEPA's have been created (in Cyprus, Turkey, Australia, Uruguay, North America and the Ukraine). Each share the voluntary commitment to "**Save our Seas**". In 2006, INTERMEPA (International MEPA) was created as an umbrella organizations and to demonstrate that the marine environment is independent of "politics of any nation or nations" and to foster the voluntary cooperation of its members in order to:

- Encourage the effective compliance of the members of every MEPA with the national and international laws and regulations adopted for the protection of the marine environment from pollution;
- Conduct a uniform public awareness campaign with top priority to offer young schoolchildren in every MEPA's country a specially designed education on the marine environmental and the ways to prevent its pollution;
- Create and promote safety mindedness and security spirit within the industrial sectors in each country that are voluntarily enlisting as members in every MEPA;
- Enhance quality standards and professional competence throughout each MEPA's membership and especially the members from within the maritime community, with the means of a concerted training effort to educate and inform all, from the owner to the youngest employee of every participating company;
- Cooperate with international organizations, such as the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the European Union, as well as national agencies, i.e. coast guards, port authorities, tourist boards and any other entity whose aims coincide with those of INTERMEPA;
- Promote relationships and/or partnerships with educational institutions (schools, colleges, universities, maritime academies, and other MET institutions) to further spread the MEPA voluntary commitment within today's youth who are the world's future scientists, engineers, managers, and politicians;
- Publicly recognize individuals, associations, organizations, companies and any other that demonstrate outstanding achievements in the field of the protection of the marine environment from pollution; and
- Promote and spread the MEPA philosophy in other countries.

Typically, to establishing a MEPA, whoever has the initiative to establish a MEPA should first submit to the Secretariat and through it to the Steering Committee:
- Written proposal by one existing MEPA member of INTERMEPA;
- Draft declaration similar to INTERMEPA's with a list of the particulars of the founders;
- Statement providing that it is a non-profit, private initiative; and
- Written support of at least two of IMO, UNEP, WWF, ICS, and prospective volunteer membership mainly from within the ranks of shipping and the wider business community of the home country.

By joining, the new member has access to information material, technical assistance and other support from the existing members. As can be seen by this foundation process is "top-down" in that it is driven by an often high-level organizing organization within the maritime industry (as opposed to a "bottom-up" or more organic "grassroots" formation from an individual or employees). This will become an important distinction later in the article as a "bottom-up" approach will later be explored.

1.2 International Association of Maritime Universities

[9] The International Association of Maritime Universities (IAMU) was founded by seven universities representing the five continents of the world (representative universities) in November of 1999, with a shared recognition of significance of maritime education and training (MET) in the rapid globalization of the international shipping arena. Since then, IAMU has significantly expanded its membership, and now boasts 58 universities/academies/faculties of the world's maritime education and training institutions, and the Nippon Foundation as its members, totaling 59 altogether.

The original representative universities at the time of foundation in 1999 are:
- Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport (representing Africa);
- Australian Maritime College (representing Oceania);
- Cardiff University (representing western Europe) [now replaced by Polytechnical University of Catalonia, Faculty of Nautical studies, Barcelona];

- Istanbul Technical University, Maritime Faculty (representing Mediterranean, Black Sea, as well as central and eastern Europe);
- Kobe University of Mercantile Marine (representing Asia) [now transformed to Kobe University, Faculty of Maritime Sciences];
- Maine Maritime Academy (representing the Americas including the Caribbean Sea); and
- World Maritime University (of general representation).

The IAMU is the global network of leading maritime universities providing maritime education and training (MET) of seafarers for the global shipping industry. All members of IAMU share the understanding that:
- Globalization has been progressing rapidly in the international shipping arena;
- Safety, security and environmental protection [emphasis added] are crucial issues for the maritime sector; and
- Passing on maritime skills and knowledge to the following generations needs to be achieved on a global scale.

All members of IAMU also recognize the significance of MET and note that:
- The shipping industry is a service industry, in which human resources are the critical element;
- It is only feasible to secure and to preserve highly qualified human resources in the maritime industries through effective education and training; and
- Effective education and training in the maritime sector derives from scientific and academic rigor and development of a clear link between practical skills, management techniques and a focus on quality.

Based on this shared understanding, it has been mutually agreed that members shall:
- Cooperate with each other in a range of scientific and academic studies, developments, and practical applications associated with MET;
- Endeavor to achieve measurable and worthwhile outcomes for MET through IAMU activities;
- Publicize the results of their activities as extensively as possible both within and outside IAMU, and shall endeavor to accumulate scientific results for the benefit of the international maritime community; and
- Thereby contribute to the enhancement of maritime safety, security and environmental protection [emphasis added].

The Association was created in 1999 by a group of maritime universities from across the world as a non-profit organization. It is interesting to note that, like INTERMEPA, IAMU is a non-profit collection of affiliated organizations who share similar interests and missions.

The balance of this article will examine the collaborative value creation (CVC) framework as it applies to partnerships among non-profit organizations. It will then examine the international MEPA's and the IAMU as two such non-profit organizations with aligned missions who might benefit from enhanced partnership.

2. Collaborative Value Creation

The socio-economic and environmental problems facing the world are too difficult for individual organizations to address adequately [4]. Since we are "all in this together," we can no longer "go it alone;" collaboration between and among organizations is an imperative [10]. Businesses have long collaborated or co-created value with other businesses and their customers [11, 12, 13] and have worked closely with governments or non-profits [14, 15, 16] in cross-sector partnering. We are now seeing non-profit organizations collaborate and co-create value with each other [17, 18]. Using a collaborative value creation framework (CVC) [4, 5], this article explores opportunities among non-profit organizations to collaborate and co-create value.

The CVC framework is comprised of four components: 1) the *value creation spectrum*, 2) *collaboration stages*, 3) *partnership processes*, and 4) *collaboration outcomes*. While this CVC framework was originally established to explore the nature of collaborations between business and non-profit partners, it will be used in this study examine the collaboration between two non-profit organizations.

2.1 Value Creation Spectrum

According to Austin and Seitanidi, the creators of the CVC framework, greater value is realized as collaboration moves across the value creation spectrum (from sole creation toward co-creation) [4]. In essence, as organizations deepen their partnering efforts, more value may and often will be created at all levels. In an effort to deepen the understanding of this value creation spectrum, the various dimensions indicated by sources of value will be examined.

There are four proposed sources of value in organizational collaboration:
- *Resource complementarity* – While much of the resource dependency literature focuses on partnering to access resources other than those already possessed, there is support for the notion that greater value co-creation can exist when partners exhibit fit and complementarity also [19, 20].
- *Nature of resource* – Similarly, partners can share generic resources that all organizations possess (e.g., money/time, reputation/brand). However, when partners share unique, organization-specific resources (e.g., knowledge, membership, networks), there will be a greater potential for value co-creation.
- *Resource directionality and use* – Resources can flow unilaterally or reciprocally. However, it is suggested that as complementary and distinctive resources are co-mingled, new services or activities can be created that neither of the organizations could have created on their own.
- *Linked interests* – While cross-sector alliances may have difficulty in that they do not share objectives or even value functions, in a single-sector, value co-creation may be enhanced when both partners perceive self-interests to be linked (by the value created for each other or the social good).

With the above sources of value in mind, four types of value can be derived in varying degrees: 1) associational value (based on the benefit achieved from the relationship itself), 2) transferred resource value (based upon the exchange of resources), 3) interaction value (resulting from derived intangibles like trust, reputation, joint capabilities), and 4) synergistic value (such that what is produced collaboratively is "more than the sum of its parts").

2.2 Collaboration Stages

Partnerships are dynamic and as they evolve, so too does the nature of value creation. To describe the various stages of collaboration, Austin [21, 22] created a collaboration continuum consisting of three-stages: 1) *philanthropic* (typically where a corporate donor unilaterally transferred resources to a non-profit recipient), 2) *transactional* (where partners reciprocally exchanged resources), and 3) *integrative* (where organizations integrate missions, strategies, etc. for the purpose of co-creating value). A fourth stage is also envisioned that goes beyond integrative collaboration – *transformational* collaboration (where organizations co-create transformative change at the societal level) [5]. This last highest level stage of convergence, marked by increased interdependency and intensity of relationship, is emergent with some signs of practice, but not fully realized.

It is important to consider collaboration as dynamic within the stages of development. The continuum does not represent sequential progression of discrete points. A partnership may be partially in one stage and partially in another. A partnership need not pass through every stage. Likewise, partnerships may move in either direction along the continuum at different points in time.

The nature of the relationship between partners changes in intensity and form of interaction across the four stages. The following figure illustrates a few key dimensions about the nature of the relationship and how it might change across the four stages within the collaboration continuum. A more complete listing of these dimensions can be found in the original work of Austin [21, 22, 4].
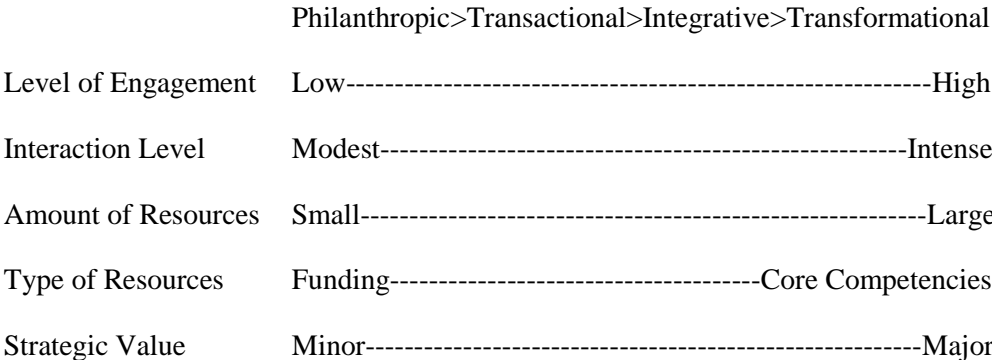
Philanthropic>Transactional>Integrative>Transformational

Level of Engagement	Low---High
Interaction Level	Modest--Intense
Amount of Resources	Small---Large
Type of Resources	Funding------------------------------------Core Competencies
Strategic Value	Minor--Major

Figure 1 Nature of Relationship Across Collaboration Continuum

Taken together, the above concepts can be formed into a comprehensive CVC spectrum [4].

	Sole-Creation--->Co-Creation
SOURCES OF VALUE	
Resource Complementarity	Low-->High
Resource Nature	Generic------------------------------------->Distinctive Competency
Resource Directionality	Unilateral--->Conjoined
Linked Interests	Weak/Narrow--------------------------------------->Strong/Broad
TYPES OF VALUE	
Associational Value	Modest--->High
Transferred Resource Value	Depreciable--->Renewable
Interaction Value	Minimal-->Maximal
Synergistic Value	Least--->Most
Innovation	Seldom--->Frequent
STAGES	Philanthropic-->Transactional-->Integrative--->Transformational

Figure 2 CVC Spectrum

2.3 Partnership Process

Next, once the importance of a partnership has been understood according to the CVC, an organization must embark upon partnership processes that involve: 1) *formation*, 2) *selection*, 3) *design*, 4) *operations*, and finally 5) *institutionalization*. Partnership formation, as defined by Selsky and Parker [23], is often defined by initial conditions, contexts, and opportunities. In other words, formation is the determinant(s) by which CVC opportunities can be identified and evaluated for action. An important element of formation is fit within the partnership – can the partnering organizations achieve congruence with respect to perception, interests, and strategic direction. In order to evaluate organization fit as part of the formation, the CVC recommends the following process.
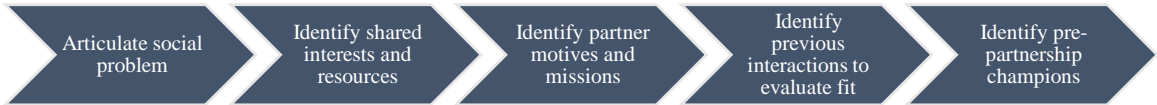

Articulate social problem → Identify shared interests and resources → Identify partner motives and missions → Identify previous interactions to evaluate fit → Identify pre-partnership champions

Figure 3 Partnership Formation Process

Partner selection is part of and an extension to the formation process. As might be expected, poor partnership selection is a common reason for partnership failure [24]. The process of assessing potential partners is further facilitated by developing partnership-specific criteria (e.g., target industry, scope of operations, time scales of operation). Seitanidi and Crane [25] created a partnership selection process for co-creation of value that included: 1) assessing potential, 2) developing partnership criteria, and 3) risk assessment.

Once formation and selection takes place, the partnership must be implemented, which serves as the CVC engine. There are many parameters that influence design and operations (e.g., setting objectives, specifying structure, forming rules, drafting MOUs, establishing leadership positions). These forms of formal control are typically identified early on and have significant influence on the partnership that ultimately develops. The CVC framework suggests a set of partnership design and operations processes that involve iterative experimentation and adaptation (at the organizational and collective levels) leading to operationalization (which includes the stabilization of shared processes and structures [25]). Another useful framework for considering partnership processes involves educational institutions efforts to collaborate [26], including pilot studies to get to know partners, a limited cooperation phase, and followed by an extended cooperation phase. Partnering processes are deemed complete when convergence, fusion, or abandonment occur.

2.4 Collaboration Outcomes

Collaboration outcomes are the metric by which the partnership is judged. Understanding of collaboration outcomes is an evolving area of practice and research, particularly when the focus is on benefits to society [27, 28]. Traditionally, partnerships between businesses focused on internal value creation, but more recently there has been a strong shift to focus on external value creation, particularly when it comes to partnerships among non-profit organizations. Example include collective impact [29], social value measurement [30], and social impact beyond financial returns [31]. For non-profit partnerships, collaboration outcomes "should encompass the social value generated by the collaboration [5]. This form of external value creation can be evaluated across different levels [32, 33], but the focus here will be at the macro- (vice meso- or micro-) level. At the macro-level, the loci of focus is on the generation of social, environmental, or economic value for the broader community or society beyond the partnering organizations.

3. Case Study

Most of CVC framework comes from the perspective of a "top-down" approach. For the purposes of later argument, lets now consider the potential for partnership between INTERMEPA and IAMU (two non-profit organizations) using the CVC framework:
1. Is there potential value in such a partnership? Yes. Through resource complementarity and shared interests (namely protection of the marine environment), associational and interaction value are highly likely. Additionally, assuming a depth and breadth of the partnership, synergistic value may also be realized.
2. How might the partnership develop? Any partnership is only as strong as the commitment of member organizations and individual efforts. Given the strong overlapping missions in the area of environmental protection and education, it can be foreseen that a high level of development could be realized at the integrative, or even eventually transformational, level.
3. What might the processes of such a partnership look like? The first three conditions illustrated in figure 3 of partnership formation exist. There is no known history of efforts (unsuccessful or otherwise) to previously form a partnership. The next formation step would be the identification of champions within each organization to shepherd the formation. Taken together, this selection of potential partners would set up the foundation necessary design and implementation of the partnership (through MOU of other means).

4. Which outcomes might this partnership adopt? Any partnership should have realistic measurement objectives to inform strategy and operations. Any objectives would be a significant topic for the design of the partnership, but could include aspects of education, outreach, and advocacy, as well as direct impact on the ideal to "save our seas".

While a "top-down" approach to developing a partnership among non-profit organizations would likely be effective (and should be pursued), we will present a case study to illustrate how a "bottom-up" approach may be equally effective. In fact, the "bottom-up" approach has the added advantage that it "provides an opportunity for community empowerment that conventional approaches have failed to provide" [34]. This type of approach at the local and regional (as opposed to national and international) level allows for stakeholder involvement at the community level. Given the interests of the authors, this case study leverages the depth of experience in founding and running a Marine Environmental Protection Association (MEPA) in North America (second author) and the creativity of launching and growing a local NAMEPA chapter at a North American maritime education and training (MET) university (first author) against the interest to form a similar MEPA-styled chapter at MET university in Japan (third author), considering "the rise of Japanese NGOs… resulting from 'bottom-up' motivation to address socio-economic, technological, and environmental concerns in an increasingly borderless world" [35]. The history of the Japanese environmental movement has illustrated that while "weakly consolidated at the national level" two-decades ago, recent events have brought heightened attention to environmental issues that would allow for a strong "bottom-up" approach [36].

This final section will draw upon the experience in successfully forming and growing the NAMEPA and translating lessons learned there toward establishment of a new chapter in Japan that might form the foundation for a NIPPONMEPA.

When the now Executive Director of NAMEPA was in Greece in 2006, Ms. Carleen Lyden-Klus was asked why no MEPA existed in North America. Upon return, after interviewing key stakeholders (e.g., ship owners, class societies, Coast Guard officials), a consensus for support was built. A sponsor in the form of the other co-founder (and until recently Chairman of NAMEPA), Mr. Clay Maitland, was identified and invited to underwrite the effort and work set forth to develop a concept statement and apply to INTERMEPA using the process previously described. In 2007, a "road trip" of seminars was conducted to engage stakeholders (e.g., maritime concerns, regulatory agencies, and environmental conservancy groups) and develop common vision built upon mutual interests to preserve the marine environment.

A portfolio of educational materials and programs were developed to education the public, with a focus on K-12 students, as future stewards of the environment. That outreach extended into the maritime academies where local chapters have been formed to further extend the reach of the mission. This structure of leveraging alliances is crucial given the small size of the non-profit NAMEPA organization (currently two full-time and 11 part-time employees in addition to the Executive Director). Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) were developed with the US Coast Guard, Transport Canada, US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, INTERTANKO, Chamber of Shipping of America, the US Power Squadron, and more.

To establish a local MEPA chapter (where a national or regional MEPA does not exist), the following "bottom-up" steps are suggested:
- Review NAMEPA chapter guide (available in hardcopy and digital forms).
- Review the by-law structure of NAMEPA, and consistent with national non-profit (or NGO) laws and regulations. When operating a student chapter under the auspices of a MET college or university, such as Kobe University, separate by-laws may not be necessary and local rules may dictate.
- Recruit a cadre of environmentally-minded students (preferably those who will be around for at least a couple of years to accomplish formation work and activities).
- Review the mission of MEPAs and identify which aspect will best serve the interests of the chapter and the community. Each MEPA and chapter are unique and based upon the strengths

of membership. NAMEPA has a strong communications theme reflective of the Director's expertise. HELMEPA is active in seafarer training to address a need in Greece.

- Develop your platform and mission.
- Identify officers and a Board of Directors (making sure to invite key stakeholders from the maritime industry and environmental advocacy groups).
- Seek support from the maritime industry and its members (e.g., Japanese ship owners and shipping companies, Class NK, Japanese Ministry of Transport, and former Secretary-General of the IMO, Hon. Koji Sekimizu).
- Identify an anchor sponsor (e.g., like NIPPON Foundation support for IAMU).
- File for MEPA status through INTERMEPA process.
- Host a kick-off education event and invite campus community, maritime industry leaders, and local community (e.g., TEDx Talks, themed Pecha Kucha night, etc.). Consider a blend of student/faculty and industry speakers. Invite selected speaker from an environmental advocacy group.
- Continue to recruit new members. One great way to increase membership (as well as informing the broader public is to host a beach clean-up activity [37].
- Train members on how to deliver educational programs into local schools and public community groups.
- Continue to build using techniques appropriate for the institution and national culture. Be creative in how best to advance your mission and vision using a platform designed by your member.

Additionally, having recently established and re-energized a local NAMEPA chapter at Massachusetts Maritime Academy, it will be possible for Kobe University to use the MIX methodology [7] to conduct shared virtual events and chapter-to-chapter communication, learning, and growth. It is anticipated that by leveraging existing networks, building upon a history of success, and engaging students, an innovative and thriving NIPPONMEPA will result.

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