



REPORT OF THE WEBINAR

**Strengthening Partnership and International Solidarity
through Triangular Cooperation:
One Year after BAPA+40 and during the COVID-19 Times**

The Global Partnership Initiative (GPI) on Effective Triangular Co-operation organized the Webinar “Strengthening Partnership and International Solidarity through Triangular Cooperation: One Year after BAPA+40 and during the COVID-19 Times”, on 11 September 2020. The webinar brought together almost 100 participants from across the globe within the scope of the celebrations of the United Nations (UN) Day for South-South Cooperation. The objective of the webinar was to mutually learn and exchange views on the challenges, experience and opportunities of triangular partnerships for sustainable development, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Director of the Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Jorge Moreira da Silva, and the Director of UNOSSC, Jorge Chediek, opened the webinar. The DCD Director stressed the importance of triangular co-operation to create synergies between different partners to advance the implementation of global agendas and he emphasised the OECD’s support to implementing the outcomes of BAPA +40 by notably through the work on triangular co-operation, development finance, climate and development effectiveness. The UNOSSC Director highlighted the increased role triangular co-operation has in the efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and that the BAPA+40 outcome document recognised the importance of the modality, referring to it 73 times. Both organisations are core group members of the GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation. The directors announced the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between UNOSSC and OECD, which is the result of strong collaboration between both organisations in the lead-up to BAPA+40 and its implementation.

Tarik Iziraren, Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnership at the UNOSSC moderated insightful presentations and a fruitful discussion. Following the opening ceremony, representatives from the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development (EAPD), the Chilean

Agency for International Co-operation and Development (AGCID), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the national youth-led NGO Youth Alive! Kenya, International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the Canadian Council for International Co-operation shared examples and reflections on

- (i) how the results of concluded triangular co-operation programmes are helping the response to COVID-19 pandemic,
- (ii) how the pandemic has affected the ongoing triangular co-operation initiatives, and
- (iii) how they are adjusting and planning for future triangular co-operation in times of COVID-19.

All panellists agreed that trust and complementarities among the partners are key to effective triangular co-operation development projects. Equality and a horizontal and dynamic relationship facilitate development projects that are owned by all stakeholders involved.

In the current context of a global pandemic, we need to foster coordination and cooperation among different stakeholders. The major take away of the webinar was that triangular co-operation offers an ideal framework for coordination and cooperation, as a modality that allows the exchange of knowledge, expertise and resources among countries that, regardless of their level of development, may innovate and share creative solutions. Concluded triangular co-operation projects have contributed to the development of important sectors now crucial in the response to COVID-19 of many partners. Partners of ongoing triangular co-operation projects were able to adapt to better adjust to the current context and continue tackling sustainable development challenges, many times aggravated by the pandemic. Finally, in a post-pandemic context, triangular co-operation will offer fertile mechanism for peer-to-peer learning and strengthening of partnerships that will help us to build back better.

Bellow, some of the main examples the panellists shared during the webinar.

How are the results of concluded triangular co-operation programmes helping the response to COVID-19 pandemic?

A partnership between Egypt and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) focused on rural development of healthy villages in numerous African countries. Aiming to design community-

based integrated sustainable development, main components of the projects were related to crucial aspects such as healthy nutrition, sanitation and hygiene, when protecting local population in times of COVID-19.

Japan's triangular co-operation on infectious disease control has been focused on capacity development to respond to public health emergencies. Previous triangular co-operation initiatives promoted partners' ability to comply with international health regulation and to respond technically to emerging diseases and pandemic.

To prepare for threatening pandemics and strengthen capacity of disease control experts, JICA launched in 2017 the PREPARE programme – Partnership for Building Resilience against Public Health Emergencies through Advanced Research and Education. On the triangular co-operation axis, the programme promoted trainings in partnership with Egypt, Ghana and Kenya for health technical experts from more than 20 African countries. The Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) in Ghana hosted the training on Enhancing Laboratory Skills for Infectious Diseases in West African countries. To support the country to detect and control COVID-19, NMIMR has conducted over 370.000 PCR tests between March and mid-July, representing around 80% of the diagnosis tests to detect COVID-19 in Ghana, one of the countries in Africa with more tests per 100.000 population.

How has the pandemic affected the ongoing triangular co-operation initiatives?

Panellists agreed that the COVID-19 crisis has been an extraordinary test on the ability to think outside the box and be able to innovate and reinvent triangular co-operation programmes. To keep the ongoing efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals and continue with meaningful and effective triangular co-operation during the pandemic, it was important to adapt current projects. For that, key elements are flexibility of all partners involved, usage of e-learning platforms, and innovative thinking to respond to the COVID-19.

The Youth Alive! Kenya, with the support from the Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (Norec), fosters a youth exchange programme with Zimbabwe and Malawi. The project aims at building stronger youth and youth organisations and strengthening the internal system of partner organisations. Youth Alive! Kenya has successfully hosted 12 participants and, amid the pandemic, the exchange programme was not interrupted but is facing new challenges. To respond to that, capacity building sessions have turned to an online

format. The partner organisations are currently developing an e-learning platform through which participants can take different courses. Partners have also created an alumni platform, to facilitate the experiences and information sharing among all participants.

Adapting to webinar and online courses was also the solution to the South-South and Triangular Co-operation Forum planned for 2020, organised by the International Labour Organisation. The ILO has been using technology to innovate triangular co-operation initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the COVID-19 pandemic has already aggravated existing vulnerable conditions and unemployment, ILO has increased its efforts on social protection and occupational safety and health, as a peer-to-peer learning program with China, Laos and Viet Nam.

How are partners adjusting and planning for future triangular co-operation in times of COVID-19?

With the support of the IsDB, Egypt has employed efforts to map, document and evaluate the Egyptian centres of excellence in different sectors, to facilitate the coordination and collaboration among development cooperation agencies. Considering an enabling environment and a favourable national ecosystem, a key element to foster triangular co-operation, as promoted by the South Centre and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)¹, initiatives like these may catalyse the match-making and designing of future triangular co-operation projects.

Chile and Japan are now planning the second phase of the KIZUNA project, a training programme for disaster risk reduction (DRR) offered in Chile to professionals of partner countries from Latin America and the Caribbean region. In this case, the use of technology to develop online courses is also very much present in the adaptation plan. The second phase of the project will incorporate new elements related to the challenges raised in the COVID-19 times, as community-based disaster education, evacuation and shelters during pandemics, mental health and responses to recovery during pandemic.

Panellists shared that the pandemic is also seen a gateway to better planning and evolving new strategies to overcome already existing challenges. Reflecting on the results of the report

¹ IsDB and South Centre (2019). [Developing National Ecosystems for South-South and Triangular Cooperation to Achieve Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#).

[Equitable Partnerships through Triangular Co-operation: Experiences from Canadian Civil Society](#), the representative of the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) highlighted the rise on scenario forecasting and how civil society organisations increased creativity and are developing contingency plans to adjust to the current context. Despite knowing that no co-operation modality is a silver bullet, triangular co-operation is a path to equitable partnerships, building an enabling environment to creative solutions and innovation. The involvement of CSOs, as the previously mentioned Youth Alive! Kenya, brings important expertise, accessibility, knowledge of local needs and context, and innovative solutions, which are instrument to leave no one behind.

Final remarks

The dynamics of the webinar also opened room for exchange among panellists and participants. Responding to one of the questions from the audience, representatives from both AGCID and EAPD shared the importance of accountability and reporting all cooperation programmes, including triangular co-operation, to their respective financial ministries.

The GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation aims to foster the knowledge exchange among its members and the broader development co-operation community. Events like this are part of the effort to raise awareness about triangular co-operation, reflect on the value added of the modality and foster innovative and equitable partnerships for development.

List of speakers:

- Mr. Hesham Abdel Salam el Mekwad, Deputy Secretary General, Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development (EAPD)
- Ms. Melissa Sanchez, Program Manager, Chilean Agency for International Co-operation and Development (AGCID)
- Mr. Hisakazu Hiraoka, Director, Health Group/Human Development Department, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Mr. Norman Mbaisi, Projects Associate, Youth Alive! Kenya
- Ms. Anita Amorim, Head, Emerging and Special Partnerships Unit, Department of Partnerships and Field Support, International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- Ms. Arianna Abdelnaiem, Research Assistant, Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)