

Aid effectiveness, partnerships, and international development volunteering

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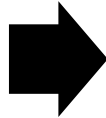
15-16 February 2017, ANU, Canberra

Aid Effectiveness in the context of volunteering

- Capacity Development: provide evidence of capacity development and technical assistance (international agenda)
- Public Diplomacy: provide evidence of advancing public diplomacy, increasing international understanding of their people, and developing skills and experience in volunteers (domestic agenda)

Australian Research Council Linkage Project 2013-2016

Flinders
University



Scope
Global

***Cosmopolitan
Development:
The Impacts of
International
Volunteering***

**Other partner
organisations &
investigators:**

National University of
Singapore (**Associate
Professor Tracey
Skelton**)

University of
Manchester (**Professor
Uma Kothari**)

Effective aid

volunteer
coordinating
organisations
(delivery partner)

*Global
partnerships*

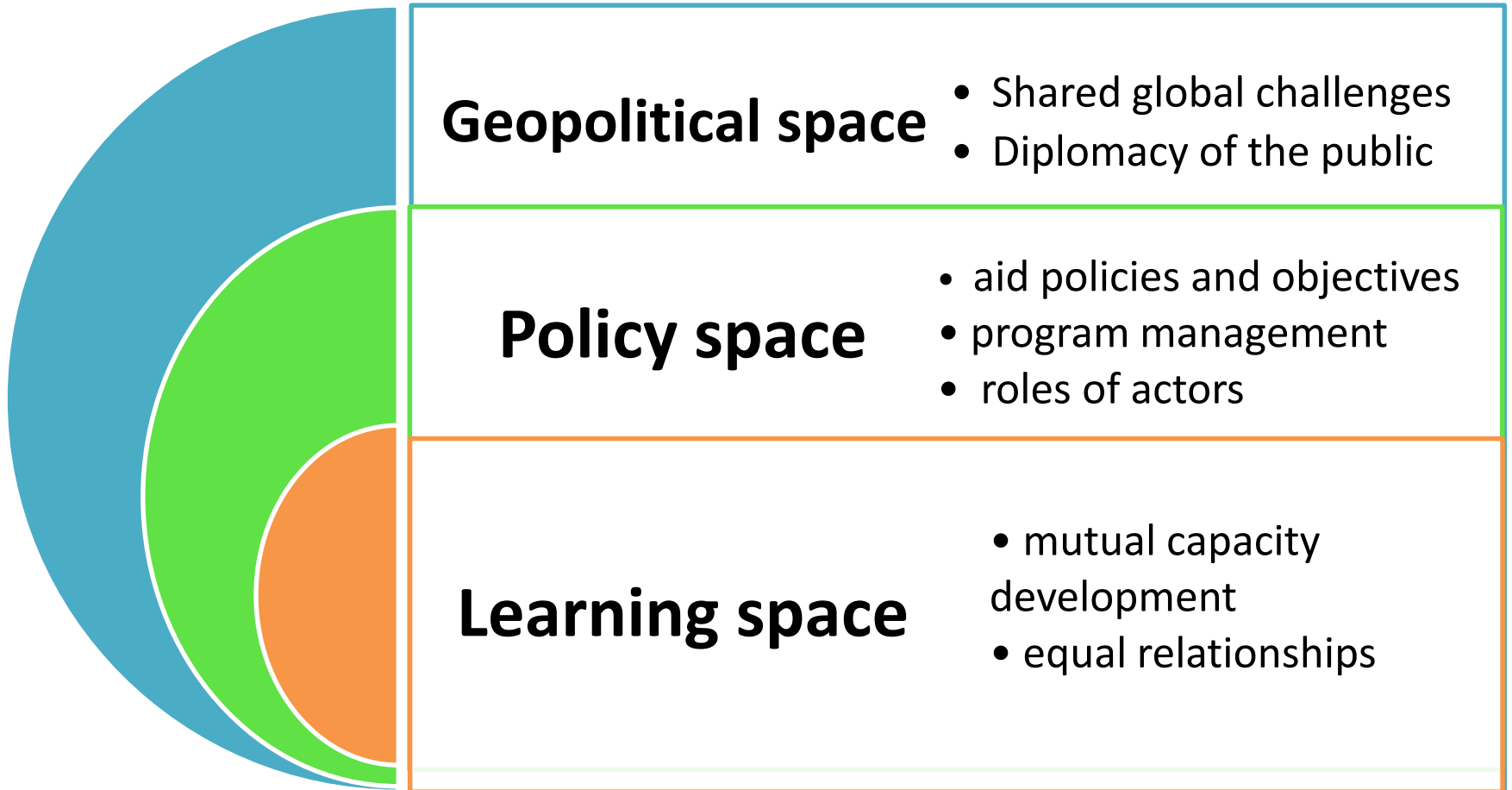


country
ownership

government
(funding
partner)

accountability
to partners

IDV spaces of partnership



Developing capacity on both sides

- “Capacity development was more around organisational strategy or program strategy, and how to look at a things a little bit more efficiently and give a bigger picture approach” **Allie (Volunteer)**
- “I was exposed to a much wider range of projects than I would have been in the same time frame back here” **Adriana (volunteer)**
- “I am now confident of going to foreign country and surviving. Adaptability skills, that’s what I have and I can use them anywhere.” **Paul (volunteer)**

“My unit focusses on environmental law. This is a new area for us. We don’t have experience in these areas. We need the volunteer to assist in building our capacity.” **Mere (government agency)**

Through “the work that she did in terms of setting up this new diligence system...we developed international guidelines for working with mining companies” **Aron (NGO)**

People-to-people impacts

[The best thing was] “the experience getting to meet the people, I’ve worked with some amazing people and got to see how real Solomon Islanders live, out in the villages” **Anna (volunteer)**

“The volunteer is more aware that we ... are not a bunch of wretches leading abysmal lives! This is how many see the Solomons. Australians who interact with [the volunteer] will get a good rounded understanding of life here.” **Peter (host organisation)**

- “When we have volunteer they can tell us so we have broader information about what we are doing. It is an indicator for us to measure and check and also to monitor where we are now.” **Yeong (NGO)**
- “Volunteers ...help us with learning how to work in a cross-cultural environment.” **Fetu (government agency)**
- “I think really what I did was establish friendships, exposing them to ideas of Australia that they were not exposed to earlier.” **Paul (volunteer)**

Some challenges

- Status of volunteers (local contexts; organisational context; power to implement)
- The contributions to relationships building (eg. social capital, trust, novel ideas, and value-driven labour)
- Outcomes rather than outputs
- Public diplomacy – difficult to attribute outcomes to inputs

Implications for practice

- Partnerships – the lens to successful placements
- HO ownership of the placement
- Monitoring & evaluation perspectives
 - Volunteer
 - HO
 - APO
 - Broader public perceptions

Implications for management

- Good management of the program is key to get both sustainable CD and PD goals
- Volunteer program is part of the broader government agenda
- But grassroots partnerships are the heart of the program
- And they are concerned with development
- Public diplomacy outcomes come out of doing development well.

Project publications

Schech, S. & Mundkur, A. 2016 'The Impacts of International volunteering: Summary of the Findings', Project Findings Part 4. Available on <http://www.cosmopolitandevdevelopmentproject.com/>

Schech, S., Skelton, T., & Mundkur, A. 2016 Building relationships and negotiating difference in international development volunteerism, *The Geographical Journal* doi: 10.1111/geoj.12199

Schech, S. 2016 Partnership, public diplomacy, or communication for development? Conflicting discourses of international development volunteering, in Hemer, O. and T. Tufte (eds) *Voice & Matter – Contemporary Challenges in Communication for Development*, Göteborg: NORDICOM.

Schech, S., Mundkur, A., Skelton, T. & Kothari, U. 2015 New spaces of development partnership: rethinking international volunteering, *Progress in Development Studies* 15(4): 358-370

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