



2018 Report of Activities



SYNERGOS
Building trust works



OVERVIEW

Our mission: The Synergos Institute is a global nonprofit organization that brings people together to solve complex problems of poverty and inequality. We work on issues such as health, nutrition, agriculture, and youth employment – creating opportunities for individuals and communities to thrive.

In 1986, our Chair, Peggy Dulany founded Synergos on the belief that people in poverty have the energy, knowledge and motivation to address their circumstances, but lack connection to the resources, institutions, and potential partners that can drive meaningful and sustainable change. She designed Synergos to facilitate relationships among institutions and people who would not otherwise have access to each other. The goal was to facilitate the development of long-term relationships and forge new paths to overcome poverty.

Today, Synergos creates, promotes, and sustains collaborations among business, government, civil society, and marginalized communities. We do this by building trust, designing and implementing change processes, and enhancing the effectiveness of bridging leaders and institutions.

Through our partnership programs in countries like Ethiopia and Nigeria we collaborate with national and local governments, civil society, multinational corporations, and local nonprofit organizations to better the lives of smallholder farmers and improve nutrition. In Namibia we are helping to strengthen the public health systems in maternal and child health and nutrition. In Brazil we concluded a large-scale partnership for educational reform that has helped improve educational outcomes for children.

We serve networks of social entrepreneurs, philanthropic families, and developing leaders committed to increasing their impact. We deliver leadership and peer learning programs to a community of 100 philanthropic families and social investors and the largest network of social innovators in the Arab world serving over 400 established and emerging social entrepreneurs and more than 3,000 volunteers. In South Africa we are working to reduce the social isolation and improve the well-being of vulnerable children.

Synergos further seeks to advance our mission through Synergos Consulting Services, a for-profit component of Synergos, offering strategic advice to companies, foundations, and philanthropists. Headquartered in New York, Synergos also has field offices in South Africa, Ethiopia, Namibia, Nigeria, Egypt, and Brazil.

THE SYNERGOS APPROACH

Our approach uses four key elements that increase individual and collective effectiveness to address complex problems:

- **Personal Reflection** - Increasing awareness of self, others, and the system, and aligning intentions and actions accordingly;
- **Systems Thinking** - Looking at complex problems from diverse and often conflicting, perspectives to understand how elements influence one another within a whole;
- **Bridging Leadership** - Building trust and tapping the fullest contributions of diverse stakeholders;
- **Collaboration** - Working with others, including those most impacted by the system, to leverage collective knowledge, resources, and action.

This approach develops bridging leaders and helps create inclusive partnerships and institutions—contributing to changes in systems, better system outcomes, and improved lives. We model and disseminate systems thinking, collaboration, bridging leadership and personal reflection among our leaders and networks to enhance their impact. These practices are also integrated into all of our programs around the world.

PARTNERSHIPS

NIGERIA: Agricultural Transformation

Synergos Nigeria has been working to reduce poverty among smallholder farmers by facilitating collaborations to shift from subsistence farming to small, medium and large-scale businesses. Transformation has taken place through the work of two main initiatives:

State Partnership of Agriculture (SPA): SPA is a strategic convening platform of key agricultural stakeholders, including federal and state governments, farmers, cooperatives, women processors, and research institutes. These state agricultural leaders meet regularly to prioritize initiatives, align state, civic and market priorities, and build the capacity to deliver on agricultural interventions through a gender- and nutrition-sensitive lens. The program works with TechnoServe, GIZ, OXFAM, ActionAid, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Institute for Tropical Agriculture and International Livestock Research Institute, among others.

Advisory Services for Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD): Through FMARD, Synergos facilitates the performance management of five Senior Technical Advisors supporting the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. Federal-level support from Synergos has led to effective prioritization of agriculture in Nigeria's Economic Recovery Growth Plan (ERGP) for 2017-2020 and development of a National Gender Action Plan. Synergos has led the first ever alignment meeting between agricultural leaders at the federal and state levels. Synergos has also become a respected and effective partner to FMARD in delivering the Green Alternative policy.

Through SPA and FMARD Advisor projects, Synergos has supported Nigeria's agricultural innovation by improving farmer access to critical inputs, enhancing farm-to-market linkages and food security, developing new policies and increasing private investment in agriculture. This strategy has been implemented in the states of Benue, Kogi and Kaduna through state-level, cross-sectoral teams working to increase cultivation of priority crops—rice, cassava, and ginger, using gender- and nutrition-sensitive strategies.

Results:

- Policy frameworks, strategies and relationships necessary for effective agricultural systems have been established in the three SPA states, including a final Agricultural Investment Policy for Kaduna, a Public Private Partnership model for Kogi, and draft

Agricultural Development Policy for Benue. The program has also supported the domestication of the federal Food Security and Nutrition Strategy across all three states.

- 12,000 smallholder farmers have been registered to access farm inputs such as high quality fertilizer and certified seeds at improved rates. Seventy-eight cassava farming clusters have been organized in Kogi State, a ginger cleaning center is being established in Kaduna State, and a policy document is being developed in Benue State. Across the States, the controlled grazing policy implementation is underway.
- The cassava peels-to-feed prototype has successfully taken cassava peels formerly used to kill weed on farmlands, fill up ditches or uproot trees and transformed them into high quality feed for livestock thereby increasing incomes for women and boosting food security in West Africa. This initiative is being scaled up in a partnership with Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). This initiative is also being profiled as a case study by Purdue University and is being scaled up by FMARD. A Youth Farm Lab has also been implemented this year.

ETHIOPIA: Agriculture & Nutrition

Synergos has been working with the Ethiopian government to improve the lives of its twelve million smallholder farmer households through agricultural growth. Agricultural growth is key to achieving the country's interconnected goals of food security, poverty reduction, and economic development. Our primary focus has been building the capacity of two ministries—the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MoANR) and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries (MoLF), along with the Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) and their partners.

Through this work Synergos has helped strengthen institutions and collaboration in the agricultural sector, enhanced leadership within the agricultural ministries, and established a cross-value chain clusters approach for priority crops. These efforts have improved prospects for smallholder farmers and strengthened engagement and services from the Federal Cooperatives Agency and brought a higher yield of selected commodities.

Synergos also has been supporting the government's Seqota Declaration efforts to end childhood stunting by 2030. Working with the Ministry of Health to implement actions that address under-nutrition through Community Labs through a multi-stakeholder platform that brings diverse groups together to develop a common understanding of the challenge and work together to innovate solutions.

Results:

- Synergos has been asked to support efforts to deliver a transformational change in Ethiopia's food and land use (FOLU) system for improved results from economic, nutritional, and environmental perspectives. FOLU seeks to catalyze diverse stakeholders by raising awareness, connecting actors to collaborate and act, and supporting commitment and integration of FOLU into Ethiopia's upcoming Growth and Transformation Plan III focused on improving the national economy through increased GDP and growth in the agricultural sector.
- A three-part resource for Ministry staff has been completed, on Collaborative Leadership for Systems Change. It covers adult learning design and management, Synergos' approach in Ethiopia with related tools, and technical skills for planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Synergos has entered into a new contract with to provide targeted technical capacity building and organizational support to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Electricity and other governmental entities and to support the transition in leadership.

NAMIBIA: Health and Nutrition

Our Namibia program is focused on health systems strengthening and nutrition. Our health systems work has improved collaboration and mutual understanding across Ministries, leading to more effective delivery of maternal health services. The health infrastructure effort has ensured that over 26 health clinics were built and access to health services in Kunene region greatly improved.

Poor nutrition is considered one of the root causes of poverty given its impact on human capital potential and economic development. Stunting is an irreversible state reflecting chronic malnutrition and in Namibia twenty-four percent of children suffer with this condition. The nutrition strategy builds on Synergos' experience in addressing maternal and child health that began in 2008 and leverages the strong reputation and cross-sectoral relationships established in the country as a result.

Currently nutrition work focuses on building capacity of the Omaheke regional leadership to provide access to health and nutrition services. Synergos provides training to regional health workers to better identify, address and refer cases of under-nutrition and other maternal

and child health issues to the healthcare system. Activities include prototyping nutrition interventions for improved health of infants and young children. In particular, the project seeks to ensure improved outreach to the indigenous San community and their connection to the formal health system.

Results

- We have added a one-year program, to establish a civil society network that engages with government on nutrition projects and programs. The network will serve to bring the voice of marginalized communities and align nutrition activities with a shared purpose and response. The project is funded by the UN's Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) pooled funds.
- Results for Development (R4D) has selected Synergos as the Namibian implementing partner for its African Collaborative for Health Financing Solutions, which seeks to advance progress on universal health care commitments.

SOUTHERN AFRICA: Children and Youth

Synergos Southern Africa Social Connectedness program works with leaders of organizations in South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland providing services to vulnerable children and youth. Studies show that a sense of isolation and lack of meaningful social connections impedes children's learning, health and capacity to function successfully as members of society. To address this dimension of poverty our program aims to increase resiliency among affected children, increase knowledge of indigenous practices that reduce social isolation.

The Social Connectedness program builds awareness of the concept, identifies best practices and informs and influences related public policy. It provides trainings and workshops toward institutionalizing social connectedness concepts and practices, partners with indigenous communities, presents on social connectedness, and engages with academic and research partners to continue development of the social connectedness concept. The program strengthens community systems by involving parents, caregivers and other stakeholders in community organizations' activities and in children's education and by building collective agency and action among communities on child and youth protection and human rights issues. Additional program partners include the Samuel Family Foundation, NACOSA (Networking HIV&AIDS Community of Southern Africa), REPSSI (Regional Psycho-Social Support Initiative), OPHI (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative), FDC

(Foundation for Community Development of Mozambique), Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and City Year.

In South Africa we co-founded the Leadership and Innovation Network for Collaboration in the Children's Sector (LINC), a fellowship of 46 leaders from civil society, government, and donor agencies that serve 13.5 million children, to help them increase their impact on children. LINC Fellows are currently exploring mechanisms for funding and governance. We also have trained over 270 care workers and community caregivers and leaders serving 2,000 youth and 8,000 children to integrate social connectedness into their programs. Through our partnership with the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), social connectedness has been implemented in 8 communities in Swaziland, working with 8 organizations and reaching 70 care workers and 1,500 isolated children.

Results

- The Social Connectedness program continues to grow, with organizations requesting support to integrate SC into their interventions. The team is working with the University of Pretoria to prototype a Social Connectedness as a Pathway Towards Teacher Resilience Initiative in the Eastern Cape, one of the poorest provinces and poorest performing schools in South Africa. The initiative will also test the draft Department of Education Rural Education Policy, which includes social connectedness as a key pillar of support.
- SOS Children's Village, an international organization supporting orphaned children with residential facilities and psychosocial support has requested that we introduce social connectedness into their program for foster parents and youth. We are building a Family and Community Connectedness Initiative, which hopefully will be implemented across their villages in South Africa.

BRAZIL: Education

The Pact for the Education of Pará aims to better prepare students to pursue improved lives and workforce opportunities. Synergos has served as the backbone organization for the Pact, which was structured for collective impact from diverse partners across multiple levels and sectors. It established among these groups a culture of participation, collaboration and management for results and learning, with a shared goal of improved education. The Pact has been pointed to within Brazil as the reference for effective cross-sectoral partnership.

This approach been incorporated into the design of the Pará Sustentável, focused on the state's goals for improvement in education, the economy, and the environment.

Results

- Documentation from the Pact is being edited and will be translated into English for wider application beyond Brazil. They include a presentation on learnings about multi-sectoral partnerships and a manual on how to create partnerships.

BANGLADESH: Drowning Prevention

The Drowning Prevention Partnership brings together key stakeholders to mobilize both political and public to elevate awareness, action, and investment on drowning, which is the leading cause of death for children under-five in Bangladesh. Studies show that most of these drowning deaths occur in small bodies of water, within 20 yards of the home, and particularly during hours when adults are working and children often go unsupervised. Community daycares have been shown to be effective for drowning prevention. Synergos is supporting and expanding a sustainable strategy for place-based care that is integrated with national programs, to reduce child drowning.

The Drowning Prevention Partnership will complement existing efforts by: 1) serving as the coordinating body for an alliance of stakeholders with related goals, 2) facilitating the design of next-generation partnerships and alternative delivery models for community day care, and 3) managing government advocacy and public information campaigns. The ultimate deliverable of this effort is a strategically-integrated and well-functioning network of partnerships that create a sustainable infrastructure for daycare programs. The program builds on research supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, conducted by local partners CIBPR (Center for Injury and Prevention Research, Bangladesh) and ICDDR,B (International Center for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh).

Results

- Stakeholder engagement began with the early child development (ECD) sectors, in particular with the Bangladesh ECD Network. Its expanding stakeholder base now also includes the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, which is establishing cross-ministerial coordination desks. A recent convening brought together over 30 organizations working across ECD, health, injury prevention and nutrition – who expressed commitment to

working through a common understanding for their common purpose of ensuring children's wellbeing.

- An analysis study on existing place-based care models, cost structures, and sustainability outlook will help identify options for sustainable delivery models, to be presented for government support.
- Communication activities were launched to raise broad awareness on drowning as a critical issue that is preventable. The project's communication and advocacy strategy is also focused on advocacy for sustainable delivery models.

MEXICO: Bridging Leadership and Inclusive Development

Synergos is currently operating two initiatives in Mexico. Our Bridging Leadership program builds support for leaders in Mexico to engage in multi-sectoral partnerships to address socio-economic challenges in their communities. The Bajío Initiative targets a region that features a rapid rate of economic growth driven by the expansion of the automotive industry coupled with a persistently high rate of poverty and unemployment, particularly among youth. The initiative, led by the Fundacion Comunitaria del Bajio, is a multi-stakeholder partnership for inclusive economic growth and social cohesion that will enable local community development by increasing the participation of marginalized groups.

Results

- The second cohort of Bridging Leadership launched and will continue into 2019. Participants from the prior cohort described the program as "life transforming" and recognized the approach as much needed in Mexico.

NETWORKS

ARAB WORLD: Social Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment

Since 2008 Synergos has built the Arab world's largest network of social entrepreneurs – change agents who combine innovation and business skills to meet pressing needs in their communities and countries. We provide leadership building, financial support, training, and networking opportunities to help sustain and scale up innovations in a variety of sectors – including youth employment, economic development, education, health, energy and the environment, sanitation, arts and culture, and social inclusion. The network includes 439

established and start-up social entrepreneurs in Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Morocco, and 2,316 youth volunteers in Egypt and Palestine.

Our Pioneers program in Palestine supports social entrepreneurs who have found innovative solutions to social challenges in areas ranging from health and sanitation, education, youth employment, community development, energy, environment, transport, to arts and culture. We deliver leadership building, financial support, training, and networking opportunities to Pioneers to expand the scale and sustainability of their initiatives. Synergos stimulates self-employment through social entrepreneurship and provides youth with the skills and experience needed to make a successful entry into the job market. The program also promotes learning and collaboration by convening participants across countries and providing strategic linkages to key actors in business, civil society and philanthropy.

Results

- Working with twenty-four startup organizations, in 2018 the program has trained 200 volunteers and helped secure 120 jobs.
- Synergos has been invited to present at the Philippines Corporate something forum, which generated interest among many of the corporate foundations to adopt elements of the Pioneer model.

GLOBAL PHILANTHROPISTS CIRCLE

The Global Philanthropists Circle (GPC) is a community of ninety-five philanthropic families representing thirty-three countries and forty-five interest areas who are making measurable change through individual and collective action that is significantly aided by their participation in the Synergos network. Synergos helps GPC members become more strategic and have more impact by connecting them to new ideas, resources, each other and the broader Synergos network. Synergos also supports GPC members in connecting to their own sense of purpose and well-being, to become more effective leaders, and bring their whole selves to their philanthropy so they can engage their full resources including influence, connections, empathy, skills, access and finance.

In 2018 the Global Philanthropists Circle (GPC) held twenty-six events that took place across four continents. Each was specifically designed and curated to foster learning and connection between peers, understanding systems, and identifying the strengths and challenges in working with stakeholders.

This years Learning Journeys to India, Italy, and Dubai/Abu Dhabi provided members with on the ground exposure to existing social programs and systems. Re-union events were held to re-connect members to each other and their own inner work. Events were also held on specific topics, such as impact investing, citizen journalism, and the future of partnerships. These activities, paired with the support of Synergos Services, helped members consider their own vision and to strengthen their own social investment practices.

Synergos continues to encourage member-led initiatives through affinity groups, hosting discussions featuring members and their work, and making individual introductions for members. A variety of partnerships have emerged between members, including joint funding of projects such as the GPC Syria Refugee Group and the Spiritual Civilization Group and two new affinity groups – Shifting the Food Systems and Impact Investing.

Synergos has developed a program in Bridging Leadership for NextGen Philanthropists. Bridging Leadership focuses on creating and sustaining effective working relationships among key partners and stakeholders and employing systems thinking to identify how elements of a problem exist within a whole.

Results

- Three Bridging Leadership trainings were held in Brazil. In February the cohort went on a successful learning journey to India where the group examined practical examples of systems thinking and collaboration, and considered ways to apply this to their own work at home in Brazil.
- A US-China Philanthropy Forum was held in Silicon Valley bringing together leading Chinese and global philanthropists and foundations for dialogue on innovations and opportunities in social investment and the role of technology.
- A learning journey to Dubai and Abu Dhabi included a peer-learning event with speakers from the region, in partnership with the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation.

KNOWLEDGE AND CASE STUDIES 2018

In dealing with complex challenges of poverty and inequity, Synergos has come to recognize the need for additional resources and guides that highlight the important role of inner work, collaboration, and bridging leadership in creating social change. In response to this need, in May 2018, Synergos launched the Knowledge Project, an initiative that aims to shed light on

the critical role of personal change for social impact. Over the next two years, Synergos will develop a set of case studies, which highlight stories from the field and share those learnings across the globe.

The overarching goal of the Knowledge Project is four-fold: to validate, support, mobilize and inform the field of inner work, collaboration and bridging leadership for social change.

- Validating inner work, spiritual development, collaboration and bridging leadership as a meaningful and additive dimension that can enhance the effectiveness of social change
- Supporting leaders and organizations engaged in social change work to apply such approaches in their work
- Mobilizing a network of individuals and organizations with a shared interest in bringing about social change through inner work, spiritual development, and bridging leadership.
- Informing practitioners on how to pragmatically apply these approaches.

