

ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMES
(AIJBES)www.aijbess.comFACTORS INFLUENCING HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT:
EXPLORING THE ROLES OF BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP
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Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 20.10.2025

Revised date: 11.11.2025

Accepted date: 24.12.2025

Published date: 31.12.2025

To cite this document:

Lladoni, R. L., & Recio, E. O. (2025). Factors Influencing Human Capital Development: Exploring the Roles of Business Partnership with The Ngos and Private Sectors. *International Journal of Business Entrepreneurship and SMEs*, 7 (26), 493-513.

DOI: 10.35631/AJBES.726034

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Abstract:

Human capital development (HCD) is vital to socio-economic development, as it equips individuals with the skills and competencies necessary for meaningful participation in the labor market. In the Philippines, a persistent mismatch between job requirements and available talent continues to contribute to unemployment and underemployment, reflecting structural gaps in education, skills training, and workforce readiness. While partnerships between non-government organizations (NGOs) and the private sector (PS) are widely promoted as mechanisms to address these gaps, existing studies remain largely descriptive and provide limited empirical evidence on which partnership factors most effectively drive HCD outcomes in developing-country contexts, particularly from both NGO and PS perspectives. To address this gap, this study examines the factors influencing the effectiveness of NGO–PS partnerships in promoting HCD in the Philippine setting. Using a mixed-methods approach grounded in an Exploratory Sequential Design, the research integrates quantitative data from semi-structured surveys conducted with 77 organizations—comprising NGOs and PS entities—with qualitative insights from key informant interviews. Regression and moderation analyses reveal that partnership effectiveness is positively associated with long-term sustainability and social and community impact. In contrast, talent acquisition and corporate social responsibility exhibit complex and non-linear dynamics, suggesting potential resource competition or misaligned organizational priorities. While diminishing returns are observed at higher levels of engagement, partnership maturity emerges as a strong predictor of successful HCD initiatives. The findings demonstrate that effective partnerships yield tangible benefits, including geographic expansion, diversification of financial resources, and strengthened organizational capacity. Businesses contribute as funders, technical experts, and policy advocates, while NGOs leverage grassroots networks to enhance community engagement and program delivery. Persistent

challenges—such as communication gaps, short-term corporate commitments, and logistical constraints in remote areas—underscore the importance of institutionalizing partnerships and aligning initiatives with community needs. Overall, the study highlights the potential of strategic, well-aligned NGO–PS partnerships to strengthen employment outcomes and support inclusive, long-term socio-economic development in the Philippines.

Keywords:

Community Engagement, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Human Capital Development (HCD), NGO–Private Sector (PS) Partnerships, Socio-Economic Development

Introduction

Human capital development (HCD) is the process of enhancing individuals' skills, education, and productivity to drive economic growth, reduce poverty, and foster sustainable development by increasing labor efficiency, innovation, and income generation (Li & Qamruzzaman, 2022). It encompasses skilling, upskilling, reskilling, and lifelong learning, with core components including education, health and well-being, work experience, and access to opportunities. Recent shifts highlight the growing emphasis on skills-based hiring, where practical competencies in fields like AI, sustainability, and digital technology increasingly outweigh formal credentials (Rockwood, 2025b). At the same time, the integration of artificial intelligence into workforce management and the rising importance of employee well-being and human sustainability emphasize the need for continuous upskilling and a more inclusive, people-centered approach to workforce development.

In the Philippines, the evolving work landscape reflects these global transformations. Hybrid work models are now common, with flexibility highly valued yet engagement challenges persisting. High turnover rates in sectors such as BPO underscore the urgency of stronger retention strategies, while rapid digitalization means that nearly 68% of Filipino workers will require further training by 2025 (Person, 2025). Organizations are responding by embedding inclusive leadership, prioritizing innovation and belonging, and leveraging people analytics to guide workforce planning (Phri, 2025). Labor market data further reveal progress: in January 2025, unemployment declined to 4.3%, labor force participation rose to 63.9%, and youth employment improved significantly as the NEET rate dropped to 11.7% (Mapa, 2025). These gains signal momentum in addressing job mismatch, a long-standing challenge that limits the full potential of young Filipino human capital (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2024).

Within this context, multi-sectoral partnerships—particularly between NGOs and the private sector (PS)—play a crucial role in bridging education, training, and employment gaps. NGOs bring grassroots connections and community trust (Habtom, 2019), while the PS contributes resources, technical expertise, and opportunities. However, these collaborations face persistent challenges: NGOs grapple with restrictive funding and complex reporting requirements (Eckhart-Queenan et al., 2019), while PS entities operate under compliance demands and profitability pressures. Disparities in organizational culture, resource distribution, and performance expectations often complicate collaboration (Abiddin et al., 2022). Sustaining partnerships requires building mutual trust, shared values, and adaptive communication (Olena Kulykovets, 2024), alongside inclusive frameworks that address gender disparities and cultural sensitivities (Gupta, 2021). Moreover, restrictive legal frameworks further constrain NGO capacity to mobilize funding and advocate effectively (Hayman., et al, 2019).

A further challenge lies in measuring impact: NGOs typically prioritize qualitative indicators of social change (Goncharenko, 2019), while businesses emphasize quantitative metrics such as return on investment (Zubeiru Salifu et al., 2023). Reconciling these differences through shared impact metrics and accountability mechanisms is essential to ensure that partnerships remain effective, sustainable, and responsive to community needs (Russell et al., 2021). In sum, strengthening NGO–PS collaboration in HCD is vital to maximizing human capital potential in the Philippines and achieving long-term socio-economic progress.

Literature Review

Human Capital Development

HCD encompasses the lifelong acquisition of skills, competencies, and knowledge required to meet evolving labor market demands (El Chaarani & Raimi, 2021). Beyond addressing skill mismatches, HCD contributes to innovation, productivity, and economic competitiveness at individual and societal levels (Oostlander et al., 2020). Education and training—whether formal, vocational, or through continuous upskilling—remain central to HCD, enabling individuals to acquire both technical and socio-emotional competencies increasingly demanded by employers (Alkahrer & Gan, 2020; Hosain et al., 2021). Governments play a pivotal role by shaping policies, funding training initiatives, and removing barriers to employment, particularly among marginalized populations (Ralston et al., 2020). Policy interventions such as apprenticeships, labor market reforms, and inclusive education initiatives further influence HCD outcomes (Johnson et al., 2020).

Partnerships between the PS and educational or training institutions are increasingly recognized as a critical mechanism for aligning human capital with industry needs (Wang & Horton, 2020; Singh et al., 2021; Remington, 2017). Employers contribute by offering industry-relevant programs, apprenticeships, and workplace learning opportunities that enhance job readiness and facilitate smoother school-to-work transitions. From E-Learning to Industry 4.0 | IEEE Conference Publication | IEEE Xplore, (n.d.), technologies such as e-learning platforms and digital classrooms have also reshaped access to training, expanding the reach and scalability of HCD initiatives. The rapid digitalization of work has heightened the importance of digital literacy—from basic computer skills to advanced competencies such as data analytics and cybersecurity—while simultaneously underscoring concerns regarding the digital divide (Mubarak & Nycyk, 2017; Ifijeh et al., 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated this transition, highlighting the need for adaptability and digital competencies across sectors (Nataliya Berbyuk Lindström et al., 2023; Siankwilimba et al., 2023).

Evaluating the effectiveness of HCD initiatives is essential for evidence-based policy and resource optimization. Data-driven assessments allow stakeholders to identify successful interventions, address gaps, and refine strategies for improving long-term outcomes (Nassar et al., 2019). Contemporary HCD also emphasizes lifelong learning and entrepreneurial skills, recognizing the role of self-employment and business creation in economic diversification and resilience (Choy & Le, 2023; Mason, 2018). As work structures continue to evolve—including the rise of the gig economy—workers increasingly require a combination of technical expertise, self-management skills, and socio-emotional competencies to navigate new employment landscapes and transition into higher-value roles (World Economic Forum, as cited in Balakrishnan, 2022). Collectively, these perspectives illustrate that HCD is a multidimensional and collaborative endeavor shaped by government policies, industry engagement, technological advancement, and continuous learning opportunities.

Driving PS-NGO HCD Partnerships

Private sector (PS) organizations increasingly recognize that a highly skilled human capital is central to competitiveness, innovation, and long-term performance in a globalized and technology-driven economy (Bosch, 2019; Azzopardi et al., 2021). Through HCD partnerships with NGOs, employers can help build industry-relevant talent pools that address skills mismatches, talent shortages, and emerging technological demands (Gabriel & Ravindran, 2021; Sujova et al., 2021). Participation in such initiatives also strengthens CSR profiles, as companies are rewarded reputationally for investments in education, training, and community-oriented development (Sudirman et al., 2021). According to Bertheau et al., (2020), increasingly, PS entities view HCD partnerships as a strategic avenue to cultivate diverse and inclusive workforces, benefiting from the varied perspectives and innovative capacities of individuals from marginalized groups.

Regulatory and policy environments further shape PS motivation to engage in HCD collaborations. In many contexts, governments encourage or mandate corporate participation in training programs, particularly those targeting disadvantaged populations (Bertheau et al., 2020). Government-led CSR policies may also reduce earnings management and tax avoidance practices, demonstrating the governance-related value of aligned social initiatives (Liu & Lee, 2019). Beyond compliance, PS entities invest in HCD to enhance talent retention, reduce turnover costs, and support employee satisfaction and career progression—outcomes strongly linked to organizational performance (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017; Cloutier et al., 2015). These drivers are particularly salient in sectors facing acute competition for specialized labor, where proactive engagement in skill development provides a competitive advantage (Van den Broek et al., 2018). Partnerships with NGOs further enable tailored training programs, aligning curricula with present and future industry needs (Seddighi et al., 2020).

Intrinsic motivations also influence PS engagement in HCD initiatives. Many organizations perceive themselves as integral to the communities they serve and feel a moral responsibility to contribute to social welfare by improving workforce employability (Rosca et al., 2017; Bin, 2017). This intrinsic commitment manifests in employee volunteerism, leadership advocacy, and sustained investment in training, scholarships, and apprenticeships. Technological disruptions reinforce these motivations: rapid digitalization, shifting consumer preferences, and the rise of data-driven industries require continuous innovation and workforce adaptability (Yarnall et al., 2021; Kanbach, 2023). Collaborations with NGOs specializing in digital skills and capacity-building help companies maintain technological relevance while contributing to inclusive economic development (Habtom, 2019; Marri & Reyes, 2018). Collectively, these drivers underscore the multifaceted strategic, social, and moral imperatives that underpin PS–NGO partnerships in advancing HCD.

Capacitation Through Partnership

NGOs derive significant advantages from partnering with the PS, primarily in terms of influenced resource availability and financial support (Porter & Kramer, 2018). Historically, NGOs have relied on the generosity of donors to sustain their vital project endeavors through the provision of grants and contributions. However, NGOs have realized that relying solely on such funding streams can frequently fall short of meeting the expanding needs and rising costs associated with the execution of their projects. Considering this difficulty, these resources have assumed a crucial role in enabling NGOs to not only expand the scope of their operations but also to innovate and create novel programs, thereby significantly enhancing their capacity to extend their impact and influence across diverse communities and regions. This shift in strategy

exemplifies the dynamic nature of NGOs as they seek to adapt and diversify their funding strategies to better meet the requirements of the communities they serve (Mmaitisi, L., 2020). Critical to the process of capacity building are the transmission of knowledge and the cultivation of essential skills. PS collaborators emerge as invaluable allies in this pursuit, offering their vast expertise in a variety of fields. These partnerships provide access to a treasure trove of best practices, innovative methodologies, and streamlined operational procedures for NGOs seeking to influence their capabilities. By tapping into the wealth of knowledge and experience that PS entities bring to the table, NGOs will be better positioned to effect meaningful change, advance their missions with greater efficiency, and have a greater impact within their respective spheres of influence. Through such partnerships, the boundaries of possibility for capacity-building are perpetually pushed, resulting in a nonprofit sector that is more resilient, adaptable, and influential (Nwajiuba et al., 2020). PS training and mentorship programs can influence the skills and competencies of NGO staff and volunteers, thereby enhancing organizational effectiveness. Based on the research of Puni & Anlesinya (2020), businesses commonly implement strong governance mechanisms, financial management systems, and performance metrics. NGOs can improve their transparency, accountability, and governance, which are crucial for organizational capacity-building, by implementing these practices or seeking guidance from PS partners (Vian et al., 2017).

NGOs play a crucial role in addressing various social, environmental, and humanitarian issues across the globe. While their primary mission is to make a positive impact on society, NGOs themselves can also reap significant benefits from influenced visibility and credibility (Mitchell & Stroup, 2017). Partnering with PS organizations can enhance the credibility of NGOs among donors, beneficiaries, and the wider community. Enhanced visibility can foster public trust, which is crucial for fundraising and gaining support for the NGO's mission. PS partnerships facilitate NGO engagement in advocacy and policy dialogue. Numerous businesses are actively involved in policy discussions concerning HCD, education, and social welfare. PS entities can benefit from partnering with NGOs by utilizing their expertise and advocacy capabilities to influence policy changes that are advantageous for both parties (Sarwar, 2015). NGOs can utilize a platform to advocate for policies that align with their mission and goals.

Partnerships with the PS offer NGOs a unique opportunity to actively engage in innovation and experimentation. This partnership enables NGOs to access private companies' knowledge, resources, and expertise, nurturing a dynamic synergy that can drive positive social and environmental change. PS organizations often foster a culture that encourages innovation and risk-taking. The study revealed a fascinating view into how aviation industry partners leveraged their capabilities for learning, coordination, and reconfiguration (Mousavi & Bossink 2020). These capabilities were crucial to their efforts to initiate and cultivate a niche market dedicated specifically to aviation biofuels. The study illuminated these partners' strategic actions and collaborative efforts, highlighting their commitment to sustainable aviation practices and developing environmentally favorable alternatives within the industry. This influence can prompt NGOs to adopt more innovative problem-solving strategies.

NGOs can improve their effectiveness in addressing HCD challenges by experimenting with new models, technologies, and strategies. NGOs derive advantages from collaborating with the PS to expand their reach and ensure long-term viability. According to New Frontiers in Open Innovation, 2025, PS partners can assist NGOs in scaling their programs and initiatives to reach more people or extend their operations to different regions. Moreover, the PS can support NGOs in establishing sustainable funding models, thereby decreasing their dependence on

grants or donations. Financial stability is crucial for the long-term sustainability and continuity of an NGO's mission.

The digital transformation has enabled NGOs to leverage technology through partnerships with the PS. PS entities frequently possess advanced technological resources and expertise. The development of technology is widely acknowledged as the foremost driving force in enhancing the capabilities of performance measurement and evaluation across various sectors. This surge in technological advancements has brought about a substantial increase in the adoption of cutting-edge tools and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) within the realm of NGO management. As these organizations embrace technology, they are better equipped to streamline their operations, gather real-time data, and improve their ability to assess the impact of their initiatives, ultimately leading to more effective and efficient practices in the nonprofit sector (Ghodke & Bhate, 2020). Through a variety of channels, the PS contributes significantly to financing for disaster recovery. This includes its active involvement in long-term recovery and early response efforts, its partnership with the public sector through a public-private partnership, its encouragement of technological innovation, its support for helping smaller communities manage increased funding inflows, and its assistance in completing government disbursement procedures (Chandra et al., 2016). The development of resilience is essential for NGOs operating in disaster-prone regions or during emergencies.

PS organizations frequently prioritize data-driven decision-making and performance measurement. NGOs can enhance their Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems to derive advantages from this. PS partners may be able to utilize the distinctive experience and specialized knowledge of each taking part in business. By combining their resources, these organizations can have a synergistic impact that makes it easier for them to deal with challenging issues. This cooperative approach not only broadens and deepens the projects' scope but also encourages the creation of durable, sustainable solutions that can have a more significant and long-lasting influence on the communities they serve (Nogy, 2017). Organizations can collaborate with professionals and leaders in their fields through private-sector partnerships, which provide a priceless opportunity for them to broaden their views. A deep examination of sustainability and development is made possible for NGOs by the collaborative synergy, which reveals various viewpoints and multidimensional solutions. Through these partnerships, companies learn about sustainable practices and cutting-edge strategies, improving their ability to approach complicated problems from a variety of angles (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, 2022).

Numerous PS entities possess a worldwide reach and substantial expertise in operating across diverse markets. NGOs can utilize the extensive global reach and expertise available to them to broaden their international programs and effectively engage with a wider range of individuals (Coppola, 2015). PS partners offer valuable insights into local customs, regulations, and market dynamics, which aid in the successful implementation of HCD initiatives in various regions. partnerships with the PS can result in strategic partnerships that go beyond the initial goals of HCD.

Private-sector partnerships can influence the capacity of NGOs to participate in advocacy and policy dialogue at an elevated level. NGOs play a vital part in advocating for initiatives that emphasize education and training as effective tools for empowering individuals, allowing them to obtain employment that not only pays a living wage but also provides essential benefits. Individuals are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to bridge the gap between

employment seekers and industries with labor shortages through these programs. By focusing on HCD, NGOs not only address the immediate need for skilled workers in industries with employment openings but also contribute to long-term economic growth and stability by cultivating a capable and adaptable human capital (Blom, 2021).

Challenges In Partnership

A central challenge in PS–NGO partnerships is the misalignment of organizational objectives and priorities. PS entities, driven primarily by profit maximization, evaluate success through financial performance and shareholder returns (Klimkiewicz & Oltra, 2017), whereas NGOs prioritize social impact, community well-being, and mission-oriented outcomes over financial gain (Molavan et al., 2016). This divergence may create power imbalances, particularly when NGOs rely heavily on donor or corporate funding to sustain operations (Tugyetwena, 2023), influencing decision-making and potentially compromising autonomy. Differences in performance measurement further exacerbate this gap. The PS emphasizes quantitative metrics, efficiency, and competitive advantage (Criado & Gil-Garcia, 2019), while NGOs rely more on qualitative indicators centered on social value and inclusivity (Mikeladze, 2023; Costa & Pesci, 2016). Negotiating common evaluation frameworks that satisfy both perspectives remains a persistent difficulty.

Additional challenges stem from governance, accountability, and dependency dynamics. Ensuring transparency in financial contributions and shared responsibilities is complex, particularly when funding flows predominantly from the PS (Sovacool & Andrews, 2015). Overreliance on corporate financing can restrict NGO decision-making and advocacy roles, especially when timelines and priorities are dictated by PS partners (Mukami et al., 2024). Risk aversion among PS actors may limit NGOs' ability to experiment with innovative approaches to HCD (Torugsa & Arundel, 2017). Cultural and communication barriers also impede collaboration, as the two sectors often employ different terminologies, organizational norms, and decision-making processes, leading to misunderstandings and coordination delays (Brière et al., 2015). Moreover, navigating disparate legal requirements, compliance standards, and regulatory frameworks increases administrative burdens and may constrain the partnership's flexibility (Hashmi et al., 2018; Tsohou et al., 2020).

Sustaining long-term impact presents another substantial challenge. Many partnerships struggle when expectations are unmet or when programs falter after the withdrawal of PS support (den Hond, 2012). Cultural differences—both organizational and societal—may complicate trust-building and collaborative engagement (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). Data-sharing between partners raises concerns about privacy, security, and regulatory compliance, necessitating stringent safeguards (Nair & Tyagi, 2021). Finally, external shocks such as political shifts, economic downturns, and global crises can disrupt partnership continuity and require both organizations to adapt rapidly to maintain the relevance and sustainability of HCD initiatives (Scheyvens et al., 2016). Collectively, these challenges underscore the complexity of PS–NGO collaborations and highlight the need for alignment, open communication, and robust governance structures to ensure successful HCD outcomes.

Methodology

This study employed a comparative quantitative design complemented by a mixed-methods Exploratory Sequential approach to examine NGO–PS partnerships in HCD. Guided by Bloomfield and Fisher (2019), the qualitative phase was conducted first to explore partnership dynamics and contextual challenges, and its findings informed the development of the

quantitative survey instrument. This sequencing ensured construct relevance and contextual validity.

Two participant groups were engaged: (1) PS executives and CSR practitioners across industries, and (2) NGO leaders implementing HCD initiatives related to education, skills training, workforce readiness, and job placement. NGOs engaged primarily in non-HCD advocacies were excluded. The study covered nine Philippine regions (CAR, Regions I, III, IV-A, VII, IX, X, XII, and NCR) to capture both rural and urban contexts. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that respondents had direct experience with NGO–PS partnerships. For the qualitative phase, seven NGO leaders and seven PS partners were selected based on at least three years of involvement in HCD initiatives. For the quantitative phase, 84 respondents representing 77 organizations participated (14 NGO personnel and 70 PS representatives). Sample adequacy was justified using saturation theory for qualitative data (Saunders et al., 2018) and a 10:1 sample-to-variable ratio for regression analysis (Memon et al., 2020).

Two instruments were used: a structured survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. Separate survey versions for NGOs and PS respondents contained four sections: (1) respondent profile, (2) factors influencing PS engagement (e.g., talent acquisition, CSR, sustainability), (3) partnership characteristics, and (4) HCD outcomes. All items were measured using a four-point Likert scale to minimize neutral responses. The interview guide comprised three sections focusing on partnership challenges and resolutions, community and HCD impacts, and partnership insights. Surveys were administered via Google Forms, while key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted either in person or online and audio-recorded with consent.

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, with transcripts coded and grouped into recurring themes that informed survey refinement and interpretation of results. Quantitative analysis employed Bootstrap-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) regression to address small sample size and non-normality, quadratic regression to capture non-linear partnership effects, moderation analysis to test whether NGO-provided benefits influenced the partnership–HCD relationship, and bootstrap independent samples tests to compare partnership intensity groups. Predictor variables included partnership factors (e.g., CSR, sustainability, social impact), while HCD outcomes served as dependent variables. Model coefficients were interpreted based on significance levels, directionality, and interaction effects.

Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Santo Tomas Graduate School Ethical Review Committee. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent secured prior to data collection. Confidentiality was ensured through anonymization, coded identifiers, and secure data storage. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

Results And Discussion

Drivers Of Partnership Effectiveness For HCD

Predictors Of Partnership Level (Bca Quadratic Regression)

To test how HCD-related enabling factors shape partnership strength, the study applied bootstrap bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) quadratic regression. The model examined five predictors—Talent Acquisition and HCD, CSR, Long-Term Sustainability, Social and

Community Impact, and PSNGO² (partnership squared)—as determinants of partnership level. BCa regression was chosen for its robustness in small sample sizes, adjusting for bias and skewness and improving confidence intervals without assuming normality (Iba et al., 2021; Pan & Zhou, 2020; Heng & Lange, 2024). Prior research (Rha et al., 2021; Jenkins & Quintana-Ascencio, 2020) supports its use in quadratic regression, especially to capture curvilinear relationships and turning points in partnership dynamics.

Table 1: Regression Coefficients of Factors Impact Positively the Level of Partnership

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	2.165	0.001	-	2257.97	<.001
Talent Acquisition and HCD	-0.054	0	-0.156	-194.6	<.001
CSR	-0.028	0	-0.092	-114.32	<.001
Long-Term Sustainability	0.067	0	0.172	265.31	<.001
Social and Community Impact	0.004	0	0.011	15.32	<.001
PSNGO ²	0.092	0	0.742	1066.4	<.001

All predictors were statistically significant ($p < .001$). Long-Term Sustainability ($B = 0.067$) and Social and Community Impact ($B = 0.004$) were positively associated with partnership level. PSNGO² was the strongest positive predictor ($B = 0.092$; $\beta = 0.742$), indicating nonlinear partnership gains consistent with partnership maturation—as collaboration deepens, mechanisms such as trust, shared routines, and institutional support may accumulate and strengthen engagement.

In contrast, Talent Acquisition and HCD ($B = -0.054$) and CSR ($B = -0.028$) showed negative associations. This pattern suggests that “talent” and “CSR” can function as contested partnership spaces rather than universal enablers. Two plausible interpretations align with qualitative themes:

1. Goal misalignment and crowding dynamics—talent objectives may prioritize employer-ready outputs, while NGOs may emphasize inclusion and long-term mobility; and
2. Legitimacy and reputational risk—CSR-linked partnerships may trigger concerns about symbolic compliance (e.g., “washing”), which can reduce trust and weaken partnership quality when values, beneficiaries, or corporate reputation are misaligned.

Partnership Outcomes for Ngos

Across four benefit domains, bootstrap independent-samples tests compared “Moderate evidence” (Group 3) and “Strong evidence” (Group 4) partnership levels. Mean differences were consistently significant in favor of the Strong partnership group. Negative mean differences therefore indicate higher perceived benefits under stronger partnerships.

Financial Resources and Funding Diversification

The largest gap was Innovation and Best Practices ($MD = -0.750$, $p < .001$), suggesting that stronger partnerships are associated with more adaptive financing, improved practices, and stronger program resilience. Variance heterogeneity in some factors indicates that funding benefits differ across contexts and partnership arrangements (e.g., short funding cycles vs.

embedded annual budget lines). Findings align with Indangasi (2023) on revenue diversification driving NGO sustainability.

Table 2: Financial Resources & Funding Diversification

Factor	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances
Strategic Alignment and Objectives	-0.571	<.001	F = 157.091, Sig. = 0.001
Financial and Return on Investment (ROI) Impact	-0.5	<.001	F = 0.736, Sig. = 0.413
Social and Community Impact	-0.071	<.001	F = 0.068, Sig. = 0.800
Resource Allocation and Operational Effectiveness	-0.357	<.001	F = 3.409, Sig. = 0.098
Innovation and Best Practices	-0.75	<.001	F = 0.113, Sig. = 0.744
Sustainability and Scalability	-0.107	<.001	F = 6.236, Sig. = 0.034

Capacity-Building and Technical Expertise

Table 3 indicates significant improvements across all factors, with the largest differences in Financial/ROI Impact (MD = -0.767, $p < .001$) and Strategic Alignment (MD = -0.667, $p < .001$). This supports the interpretation that NGOs gain more technical capability when partnerships include clear objectives and a credible value case. Importantly, qualitative accounts suggest that “ROI” is not always immediate; it often emerges through skills alignment, mentoring, and structured work-based learning models.

Table 3: Capacity-Building and Technical Expertise

Factor	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances
Strategic Alignment and Objectives	-0.667	<.001	F = 33.727, Sig. = <.001
Financial and ROI Impact	-0.767	<.001	F = 2.399, Sig. = 0.156
Social and Community Impact	-0.633	<.001	F = 0.066, Sig. = 0.802
Resource Allocation and Operational Effectiveness	-0.6	<.001	F = 117.818, Sig. = <.001
Innovation and Best Practices	-0.233	<.001	F = 4.906, Sig. = 0.054
Sustainability and Scalability	-0.033	<.001	F = 2.869, Sig. = 0.125

Infrastructure and Geographic Expansion

Table 4 shows significantly higher benefits for the Strong group, especially Financial/ROI Impact (MD = -0.833, $p < .001$). This pattern is consistent with “scale enablers” described in interviews—shared infrastructure, pooled resources, and governance mechanisms (e.g., ordinances, policy integration) that support program continuity across localities.

Table 4: Infrastructure & Geographic Expansion

Factor	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	Sig.
Strategic Alignment and Objectives	-0.167	<.001	Equal variances assumed	0.205	0.662
Financial and ROI Impact	-0.833	<.001	Equal variances assumed	0.205	0.662
Social and Community Impact	-0.556	<.001	Equal variances not assumed	130.909	<.001
Resource Allocation and Operational Effectiveness	-0.333	<.001	Equal variances not assumed	13.091	0.006
Innovation and Best Practices	-0.333	<.001	Equal variances not assumed	6.16	0.035
Sustainability and Scalability	-0.222	<.001	Equal variances assumed	3.486	0.095

The Stronger partnerships expand infrastructure and footprint, enabled by financial viability, local skills pipelines, and governance mechanisms that persist across leadership.

Program Development and Industry Knowledge

Table 5 indicates stronger partnerships deliver better program design and industry relevance, with the largest gap again in Financial/ROI Impact (MD = -0.708, $p < .001$) and Strategic Alignment (MD = -0.417, $p < .001$). This supports a co-production view: partnerships become more effective when curricula, mentoring, and implementation accountability are jointly designed and monitored. Consistent with Warner & Sullivan (2017), trust, governance, and appropriate depth of engagement are critical preconditions to translate partnership into repeatable program know-how.

Table 5: Program Development & Industry Knowledge

Factor	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	Sig.
Strategic Alignment and Objectives	-0.417	<.001	Equal variances assumed	0.211	0.657
Financial and ROI Impact	-0.708	<.001	Equal variances assumed	0.061	0.811
Social and Community Impact	-0.167	<.001	Equal variances assumed	0.818	0.389
Resource Allocation and Operational Effectiveness	-0.375	<.001	Equal variances not assumed	36.818	<.001
Innovation and Best Practices	-0.375	<.001	Equal variances not assumed	10.227	0.011
Sustainability and Scalability	-0.250	<.001	Equal variances not assumed	6.413	0.032

Interpretive Synthesis: Across domains, the recurring “high leverage” pattern is alignment + operational execution + innovation. Strong partnerships appear to translate resources into repeatable HCD interventions, not merely one-time support.

Which Partnership Factors Most Strongly Influence HCD Initiatives?

BCa regression results in Table 6 identify the partnership features most associated with HCD outcomes. Resource Allocation and Operational Effectiveness ($B = 0.505$, $p < .001$) was the strongest positive predictor, followed by Innovation and Best Practices ($B = 0.335$, $p < .001$) and Strategic Alignment ($B = 0.222$, $p < .001$). Financial/ROI Impact ($B = 0.114$, $p < .001$) was also significant, indicating that measurable value—financial or operational—helps sustain HCD initiatives. Social and Community Impact was significant but smaller ($B = 0.028$, $p = 0.032$), suggesting it functions as an essential equity condition that complements operational drivers rather than replacing them.

Table 6: Factors Influencing NGO-PS Partnerships in HCD Initiatives.

Variable	B	Bias	Std. Error	Sig. (2-tailed)
(Constant)	0.006	-0.007	0.085	0.858
Strategic Alignment and Objectives	0.222	-0.001	0.005	< .001
Financial and ROI Impact	0.114	0.016	0.044	< .001
Social and Community Impact	0.028	-0.003	0.01	0.032
Resource Allocation and Operational Effectiveness	0.505	-0.001	0.006	< .001
Innovation and Best Practices	0.335	-0.009	0.029	< .001
Sustainability and Scalability	-0.205	0.001	0.005	< .001

Notably, Sustainability and Scalability had a negative coefficient ($B = -0.205$, $p < .001$). This result is conceptually consistent with qualitative findings: many partnerships remain vulnerable to short-term funding cycles, leadership turnover, and weak replication mechanisms. In practice, “sustainability” may be endorsed rhetorically but under-supported structurally leading to lower observed effectiveness when sustainability expectations outpace available financing, governance, or policy backing.

When Do Partnerships Translate into Stronger HCD? The Role of NGO Benefits (Moderation)

The moderation model shows that Private–NGO Partnerships ($B = 0.026$, $p < .001$) and NGO-provided Benefits ($B = 0.133$, $p < .001$) are positive predictors of HCD. The interaction term (PSNGO*BENEFIT) is also positive and significant ($B = 0.184$, $p < .001$). This indicates that partnerships produce stronger HCD outcomes when NGOs deliver substantial, credible benefits (e.g., training, placement support, community services). Conceptually, NGO benefits enhance the partnership’s conversion of resources into outcomes by improving legitimacy, reach, contextual tailoring, and accountability.

Roles That Businesses Can Adopt in Supporting HCD Initiatives in Partnership with NGOs

Roles Of Businesses as Perceived by NGOs

From the NGO perspective, businesses contribute to HCD through several interconnected roles:

- *Financial enablers.* Businesses provide funding that sustains program delivery (e.g., training materials, venues, stipends, trainers), allowing NGOs to reach underserved groups and maintain continuity of services.
- *Technical and industry partners.* Firms contribute sector knowledge, facilities, tools, and specialists who support skills training through workplace exposure and applied learning. This helps narrow the gap between training content and employer expectations.
- *Co-designers of employability pathways.* Businesses help shape curricula and delivery models by sharing labor market requirements (e.g., digital literacy, job readiness competencies). They also facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and placements that improve transition-to-work outcomes.
- *Systems and policy contributors.* Some firms engage beyond project-level support by assisting institutionalization through local ordinances, partnership frameworks, and coordination with government units to promote continuity beyond short funding cycles.
- *Innovation partners.* Businesses support adaptive delivery (e.g., hybrid training, flexible models for low-connectivity areas) and community initiatives that complement HCD (e.g., youth leadership and well-being support).

Roles Of Businesses as Perceived by The Private Sector

From the PS perspective, partnerships deliver both workforce and social value:

- *Workforce developers.* Businesses collaborate with NGOs to reduce skills gaps and improve job readiness through structured training, mentoring, and immersion programs.
- *Talent pipeline builders.* Partnerships produce pools of qualified candidates, particularly in sectors facing shortages. This can reduce recruitment time, onboarding costs, and turnover risks.
- *CSR and community stakeholders.* Firms strengthen community ties and reputation through initiatives aligned with CSR goals. However, this requires credible implementation and measurable outcomes to avoid perceptions of symbolic compliance.
- *Operational coordinators.* Businesses emphasize the importance of monitoring, feedback loops, and performance tracking to maintain program efficiency and demonstrate results.

Challenges and Partnership Dynamics

Challenges Faced by NGOs

NGOs highlighted recurrent constraints that weaken partnership effectiveness:

- *Objective and metric misalignment.* Businesses may prioritize short-term results and measurable returns, while NGOs emphasize long-term inclusion and community outcomes.

- *Funding volatility.* Many initiatives depend on annual corporate cycles or project grants, limiting sustainability and follow-through (e.g., tracer studies, long-term mobility tracking).
- *Delivery constraints in remote areas.* Transport, weak connectivity, and local logistics can disrupt training and monitoring.
- *Communication gaps.* Delayed feedback and unclear expectations can slow implementation and create coordination costs.

Challenges Faced by The Private Sector

Businesses reported constraints that affect engagement and continuity:

- *Participant readiness and retention.* Workplace adjustment, commitment, and behavioral issues may reduce program effectiveness without strong screening and support mechanisms.
- *Expectation misalignment on financial contribution.* Some firms perceive assumptions that business participation must always mean direct funding, creating friction if roles are not clarified.
- *Weak incentives for sustained engagement.* Limited policy incentives (e.g., tax breaks, recognition mechanisms) can reduce long-term corporate commitment, especially during economic uncertainty.

Why CSR And Talent Variables Can Show Complex or Diminishing Effects

The findings suggest that CSR and talent-related objectives may generate nonlinear partnership dynamics. When CSR is treated primarily as a reputational activity, or when talent goals emphasize rapid placement over inclusive development, partnerships can experience higher coordination costs, trust concerns, and competing priorities. As partnership activity increases, these tensions may produce diminishing marginal gains unless governance, shared metrics, and long-term commitments mature alongside program scale.

Policy and Practice Implications Linked to Findings

- *Institutionalize partnership governance:* formal agreements defining roles, cost-sharing, timelines, and escalation pathways.
- *Adopt balanced performance metrics:* combine business indicators (retention, productivity, recruitment efficiency) with development indicators (equity, mobility, access).
- *Support multi-year HCD commitments:* incentives for longer funding horizons and continuity mechanisms to address sustainability gaps.
- *Strengthen screening and support systems:* joint pre-selection criteria, readiness modules, mentoring, and retention supports.
- *Design for remote implementation:* explicit budgeting for connectivity, transport, stipends, and local delivery capacity.

Acknowledgements

This paper is derived from the author's master's thesis. The author acknowledges the guidance of the thesis panel and the support of the UST Graduate Research, peers, and the university. This research received no specific grant from public, commercial, or NGO funding agencies.

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