Final Report to IDRC

Project: Modernizing the G8 Summit Process

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Synthesis

This project is a sequel to three previous phases - the L20, Breaking Global Deadlocks (BGD) and Widening Deepening projects (www.L20.org). The L20 Project explored the arguments for replacing the G8 with a more representative and likely more effective Summit process, focusing on raising the G20 Finance Ministers group to Leaders level. BGD demonstrated the L20 hypothesis that modernization of the global institutional architecture required a more inclusive and well-prepared summit process to lead to progress on global deadlocks such as climate change and energy security. A quasi simulation of a summit preparatory process, with the “summit table” enlarged beyond the G8, produced an illustrative consensus package, a grand bargain “Deal”. The package included a list of recommended actions, including the mobilization of the efforts of a large range of international organizations to contribute in their area of competence. The Widening Deepening project successfully tested the results with representatives of “think tanks” and international organizations working on climate change, with senior political personalities attending the Clinton Global Initiative, and with media opinion leaders from the G8+5 countries.

The project approach is to convene leaders and their senior advisors from varied backgrounds with influential researchers and policy opinion leaders to debate policy options. Papers by recognized experts are commissioned and presented to gatherings of prominent actors. The focus is on developing solutions by an international cooperative effort.

The prime objective is a more inclusive, well prepared Summit process. The project aims to help:

- Enlarge and transform the G8 into a more legitimate group with no second class members;
- Establish a “Track 2” dialogue on preparing the G20 Summits between sherpa teams of host countries and a network of policy research organizations, leading to increased capacity and more effective results.

The specific objective was that recommended initiatives would help inform preparations for the Canadian hosted Summit in 2010. Interim reports and promotional materials making the case for innovation in the summit process were produced for CIGI 09 – the annual conference held by our partner the Centre for International Governance Innovation. We authored the lead essay “The Role of the G20 in Shaping Responses to Global Crises” in “Flashpoints for the Pittsburgh Summit”, a widely circulated special CIGI Report just prior to the Pittsburgh G20 Summit.

The expected results are progress on the climate change deadlock, acceptance of the summit enlargement idea, and a global network of research institutions engaged in an established process for dialogue and exchange on global policy proposals with government officials who prepare Leaders’ Summits.

**The Research Problem**

Summit reform continues to be a perplexing problem. Over the previous three phases the L20 project has investigated the hypothesis that resolution of many multi-sector global challenges required action by leaders beyond G8 – work with leaders of the major emerging countries was also required.

Research focused on climate change and energy security. We also examined food security, migration and development. We held three meetings that were originally unplanned for. The first was in Rome, October of 2008; to brief the Italian G8 Sherpa team, the second was in London February 2009, with UK officials in preparation for the London Summit of the G20 at Heads of Government level and the third was in Seoul; to brief the Korean team preparing the 2010 G20 Summit.

We invited the Director of the Italian G8 Sherpa team to the project’s Bellagio meeting in August 2008. As a result, he invited us to send a delegation to Rome. The Rome meeting was an extraordinary off the record event, which the Italians deemed as “very useful”. In fact, Nicola Todaro Marescotti, a member of their Sherpa team, participated in our Paris event in April 2009.

Then, to exploit developments on the global financial crisis, the project’s focus shifted to governance of the international financial system and what Summits could do about it. After the G20 leaders meeting was called by former President Bush in November 2008, we approached the UK Cabinet office to arrange a Chatham House Rule day-long session to input into the subsequent London Summit, April 2, 2009.

For our meeting “Global Governance…New Approaches” (Paris 09), we found it most valuable to shift the focus to “composition” of the G20. The G20 has become a reality, but it remains unclear on what role it will play in the future, which countries will be represented, its mandate and structure. Paris 09 was originally slated to be our final meeting. We approached the Seoul Forum for International Affairs and the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy to co-host a meeting in Korea, “Korea-Canada G-20 Summit Seminar”. It was a Chatham House rule meeting with the Korean team preparing the 2010 G20 Summit meeting. Korean and Canadian researchers have agreed to work together on a joint paper series to produce pragmatic ideas to increase the effectiveness and legitimacy of the G20.
Objectives

- To expand the G8 Summit to include, on an equal basis, five important emerging economies (Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and South Africa);
- As an essential element of expansion, to establish and solidify an influential network of research institutions and international associations to dialogue with officials preparing the expanded Summits;
- To contribute to the debates on modernization of the mandates of international organizations;
- To promote the capacity of Southern institutions to generate potential global policy proposals and to provide them access to influential decision-makers;
- To solidify the international network of research institutions and organizations;
- To establish an ongoing tradition of Chatham House Rule conferences inviting members of the Summit host Sherpa teams to discuss policy ideas with the researcher network;
- To establish a continuing process for the network to contribute to the OECD policy deliberations involving outreach to the non-member major emerging economies.

Principals Findings Results and Expected Impacts

We believe we have had a significant impact on the both process and substance.

- The days of the G8 are numbered, with Leaders and influential commentators hailing the G20 as the new appropriate steering group;
- Our informal network is very well established, with dozens of expert individuals involved;
- Ideas that we have raised have entered the mainstream of debate on international institutional reform;
- We have involved researchers from Southern institutions in our events, especially providing access to the senior officials preparing Summits;
- The international informal network of research institutions and organizations has been solidified, and we have expanded membership. Partners in future efforts will include the Stanley Foundation, the Tallberg Foundation, the Club of Rome, the Council on Foreign Relations, the National University of Singapore, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the G24 Secretariat and the United Nations Foundation.
• We have established a tradition of Chatham House Rule conferences inviting members of the Summit host Sherpa teams to discuss policy ideas with the researcher network; we held events with the Italian G8 Sherpa team, UK officials preparing the London G20 Summit, and the Korean team preparing the G20 Summit. We have been invited by the Canadian team to organize a meeting in 2010 (date still to be finalized).

• We brought a North-South group to the OECD for the third April in a row and have been invited again in 2010.

**Project Design Implementation and Management**

The Project was managed by the Centre for Global Studies under the lead of Barry Carin, Associate Director at the Center for Global Studies. The research team at The Centre for Global Studies includes Gordon Smith, Executive Director, Jennifer Swift, Project Coordinator, and Nicole Bates-Eamer, Research Assistant. In addition to the project management at the Centre for Global Studies, the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) provided logistic and research contributions.

The Project has centered on conferences where we convene leading researchers with influential serving officials in a Chatham House Rule setting. In this phase there have been eight meetings:

**The Future of International Governance Architecture**
Mexico City March 10-11, 2008  
Host: the Mexican Foreign Ministry and “Sherpa” Lourdes Aranda

**Key Elements in Breaking Global Climate Change Deadlock**
Paris March 31- April 1 2008  
Host: The OECD Secretary General

**Modernizing the G8 Summit**
Bellagio Italy: August 18-22, 2008  
Host: The Rockefeller Foundation

**Briefing of the Italian G8 Team**
Rome: October 13, 2008

**Climate Change, Energy and Security**
Rio de Janeiro: November 13-14, 2008  
Host: CEBRI

**International Financial Governance; Towards the London G20 Summit**
London: February 9, 2009
Project Outputs and Dissemination

Research outputs (Including the meeting reports and all commissioned papers) are posted on the website www.g20summits.org and www.l20.org. Results are also disseminated informally through the network of individuals we engage with at the meeting. For example, we engage senior officials from foreign ministries in many of these meetings. Our purpose is engagement and persuasion, ultimately leading to the consideration of options and acceptance of the wisdom of our proposals by governments and international organizations.

Springer and IDRC have co-published the account of the early phases of the project and translated the book into French and Spanish. In addition to hard copy, the books are available on line. For example the Spanish version is at http://www.idrc.ca/es/ev-118656-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html.

Capacity Building

The ability to shift focus and make changes to scheduling and the agenda when working with partners was an ongoing challenge, but one the research team was able to master. In addition, the researcher team gained new skills including website development and graphic design.

The research team learned to effectively manage projects with multiple partners and stakeholders. The team had the opportunity to work closely with other research institutions and gained new insight on the inner workings of different organizations. Through this collaboration the capacity to effectively manage and administer projects with multiple stakeholders, geographic locations, individuals and institutions from diverse cultures and a wide range of focus areas was enhanced.

Perhaps most importantly, we levered the influence of leading Southern researchers, by providing them face to face unhurried access to the key senior officials preparing summits, after coaching sessions with the project team.
**Impact**

The research and recommendations this project has produced has had a broad global impact. The G20 is now meeting at a leaders' level which is what this project has strived for since day one. The G20 is now a common house-hold phrase.

The term “grand bargain” and many individual concrete ideas were picked up by Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the UK team as a direct result of meeting with experts from this project. (Brown met with us for an hour on February 9, 2009; many points from the papers prepared for this meeting found their way into the London Summit Leaders’ Communiqué.)

**Overall Assessment**

The “overall assessment” has been extremely positive. We are increasingly being recognized as the research authority on summit architecture. We have solidified partnerships for future collaboration and broadened our research network.

**Recommendations**

This phase of the project is finishing at an earlier date than envisioned due to the addition of three unforeseen meetings (Rome in October 2008, London in February 2009 and Korea in November 2009) and the costs associated with these meetings. We will begin a new phase of the project in January 2009. The proposed plans are outlined below. We recommend that IDRC consider supporting design and implementation of G20 outreach efforts, especially those bringing together think tanks in Africa with representatives of the G20 host sherpa teams. This would complement the major IDRC effort to build think tank capacity in Africa, providing a platform and establishing communication channels for African researchers with influential officials.

**Future Plans**

In the next phase we intend to continue to strengthen the global network, with a research focus on the substantive changes needed in the mandates and structures on international institutions and arrangements. We will emphasize providing access for Southern policy researchers through Chatham House Rule meetings, connecting them to influential decision makers in the countries hosting summit meetings and through the OECD.

Specifically, we intend to work very closely with Colin Bradford, Louise Frechette, Paul Heinbecker, Andres Rozental and Ngaire Woods. We will focus on policy briefs on G20 working methods, several co-authored by Korean colleagues, to be published by the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) including:
(i) Options for a “non-secretariat” to provide institutional memory and continuity;
(ii) A Sherpa Troika
(iii) How to bring the G20 Accountability process into the G20 context, with options on follow through in the G20 context;
(iv) Analysis of which global issues might be “low hanging fruit” for the G20 - the rationale and criteria for new issues to be taken up by the G20;
(v) G20 composition;
(vi) G8-G20 roles and relationships;
(vii) Innovative structures and informal but effective outreach mechanisms, cutting across constituencies.

In addition to the policy briefs, we will work on publications focused on the G20 and climate change, the G20 and trade issues, and on the role of the various Gs in coordinating international policies.

We are planning to hold the following events to promote the research products:\footnote{All future events are dependent on funding decisions and will require an absolute minimum of three months notice to cover attendance by high-level individuals.}:

- Spring 2010 Vancouver Outreach event contracted by DFAIT.
- Ottawa April 2010, “Track 1.5” meeting with Canadian G20 Sherpa team
- April 2010 Paris Outreach event on “hearing non-G20 voices”\footnote{in partnership with the OECD Secretary General}
- September 2010 Seoul “Track 1.5” meeting with the Korean G20 Sherpa team.
- October 2010 Accra outreach event on “Hearing non-G20 voices” (hopefully in partnership with IDRC).
- October 2010 CIGI by invitation-only event to explore a “business advisory committee” to the G20 [WEF, WBCSD, Stephen Green (HSBC) and Susan Lund (McKinsey)].

In addition to the events outlined above we are hoping to hold track1.5 events in 2011 with the G20 sherpa teams organizing the next four G20 Summits (Canada, Korea, France and Mexico).