

SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

HOW DO WE TRANSFER THE LEARNING OF RAPID COLLABORATION FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE, LEARNT DURING THE PANDEMIC, TO THE CHALLENGES AHEAD?

DATE: MONDAY 17/01/22

THEME: PARTNERSHIPS

FORMAT: ONLINE WORKSHOP

We would like to thank the discussants and all members of the Business Fights Poverty community who contributed to this workshop. Discussants: Darian Stibbe (The Partnering Initiative), David Wofford (UN Foundation), Jane Nelson (Harvard Kennedy School), Justin Perrettson (Novozymes), Lisa Goldman Van Nostrand (Sumitomo Chemical), Mario Elias Gonzalez Lupercio (CEMEX), Matthias Altmann (European Commission), Peter Koop (SAP SE), Priya Kanayson (GLIDE), Sam Davies (Plan International UK), Sweeha Panwar (The Nudge Foundation), Quetzal Tzab (ID Indígena), Keith Kibirango (Crown Agents), Alan Yeboah (Moderator, Business Fights Poverty)

Partnerships played a key role in the fight against COVID-19. During the pandemic, companies, governments, NGOs, and international organisations came together to procure and distribute healthcare supplies, provide basic goods to support the most vulnerable, inform the health guidelines of distant communities, and much more. **Cross-sector collaborations succeeded because they were agile,** they could count on the engagement of senior leadership, and partners felt they could trust each other in the face of this shared challenge. These were key factors for the unleashing of rapid collaborative initiatives.

To replicate in other issue areas the action partnerships displayed during the pandemic, participants in the workshop highlighted that members of cross-sector collaborations need to develop agility and adaptability. Given the urgency of the challenges

ahead, such as climate change and rising economic inequality, public and private actors should **ensure they have internal processes and systems that can respond quickly to emerging demands for action.** As well, partners should be prepared to adapt their operations and missions during times of crises. In some circumstances, a “business-as-usual” mindset may preclude partnerships from delivering essential support at the necessary speed.

Moreover, participants touched on basic principles that must continue guiding the development of new cross-sector collaborations. Partners and their initiatives need to ensure they do no harm. **Both the respect of human rights and positive social and environmental impacts are core values that must be embedded in partnerships** that truly want to make the world a better place. Similarly, it is crucial that companies, governments, and NGOs listen to and include the voices and inputs of the most vulnerable in decision-making processes.

“WE NEED TO ALWAYS FOCUS ON DOING NO HARM AND ENSURING STRONG GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS FOR MORE INCLUSIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION.”

“AS SOMEONE STARTING A NEW ORGANISATION WITH A FORMER COLLEAGUE, THIS WAS THE BEST PLACE TO BE.”

RESOURCES

- [The Partnering Initiative](#)
- [UN Foundation](#)
- [Harvard Kennedy School](#)
- [Novozymes](#)
- [Sumitomo Chemical](#)
- [CEMEX](#)
- [European Commission](#)
- [SAP](#)
- [Global Institute for Disease Elimination \(GLIDE\)](#)
- [Plan International UK](#)
- [The Nudge Foundation](#)
- [Crown Agents](#)