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BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 4

DELIVERING SOCIAL IMPACT



BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY

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Editor's Note

WELCOME TO BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY MAGAZINE ISSUE 4: DELIVERING SOCIAL IMPACT.

A little over a year ago, I had just met Zahid Torres-Rahman for the first time in London. Having searched high and low for a meaningful next step up the career ladder, within five minutes of meeting Zahid I knew that I wanted to be a part of his organisation, Business Fights Poverty. Fortunately for me, there was a role on offer supporting Katie Hyson, Director of Thought Leadership and the host of one of the 'Top 10 Poverty Podcasts You Must Follow in 2019'. I didn't think twice about accepting.

I never imagined I would find myself working at the intersection between business and social impact, and the past twelve months have been beyond eye-opening. If someone had said, you'll be going to New York for the UN General Assembly week, undoubtedly this would have been met with a laugh. And yet, it really did happen. The week started with supporting the delivery of Business Fights Poverty NYC², where I was impressed by the insights shared during a roundtable organised³ as part

of 'How can we embed purpose authentically into business?'⁴ a Business Fights Poverty Challenge. In addition, I had the pleasure of meeting some incredible social entrepreneurs and UN leaders, and gained invaluable knowledge whilst attending We The Future⁵, and Business Call To Action's 9th Annual Forum⁶. I have also been in an honoured position to deepen relationships with people across Business Fights Poverty's network - including our amazing Challenge Directors, Ambassadors,

With thanks to our Supporters



Content Partners, and the communications teams supporting the delivery of work being done by business to push the social impact agenda forwards.

This Issue examines the top trends and key themes we are seeing across the agenda of business and social impact. I am excited to share the latest news about Alice Allan's second Business Fights Poverty Challenge⁷ (pg. 10) - which explores how businesses can advance gender equality across the value chain by engaging men as allies, developed in collaboration with AB InBev, Stanford University's VMware Women's Leadership Innovation Lab and CARE International. As we know, the gender divide is not always plain to see, and current data suggests that an almighty gap remains.⁸ Therefore, I encourage you to subscribe and join the Challenge⁹ to be among the first to receive launch information and access to the outputs, which will offer you practical actions, takeaways and insights to help you further gender equality in your own workplace.

Business Fights Poverty's seasoned Challenge Director, David Norman, has been collaborating with Nestlé and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) to explore how businesses can harness technology to most effectively tackle modern slavery in their supply chains¹⁰. Horrifyingly, the Global Slavery Index estimates 40.3 million people are living in some form of modern slavery, including 24.9 million in forced labour¹¹. Inside this magazine, you can learn more about the work being done to tackle this issue and access a new report¹² launched at the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights¹³, which shares findings from the Challenge (pg.8).

We've also got plans to deepen the dialogue and collaborate with those on the frontline, poised to tackle some of the most pressing social challenges of our time. If your work is focused on:

- Impact measurement
- Human Rights
- Climate and Communities

be sure to get in contact with us directly at team@businessfightspoverty.org to discuss how we can deepen our collective understanding, bridge knowledge gaps, and gain valuable insights on these topics. Additional key themes we are setting out to explore can be found on pg. 32 of this Issue¹⁴.

I want to leave you with this closing thought: As we approach the end of the year and think forwards to the next, many of us experience that sensation of 'Where has the time gone?' which makes now as good a time as any to reflect. I hope this Business

We've got plans to deepen the dialogue and collaborate with those on the frontline, poised to tackle some of the most pressing social challenges of our time.

Fights Poverty Magazine provides you with something that gives you pause for thought. Whether you are already partnering with us or not, I'd love to hear your reactions to the content in this Issue. Can you share your insights and experiences, or suggest how we can collaborate in 2020 with even greater urgency and effectiveness? What were your biggest social issues of 2019 and what do you think 2020 will bring? I welcome your contact because we cannot allow the time to pass us by, given the scale of the challenges we face.

anna@businessfightspoverty.org

Anna Johnson, Communications Director, Business Fights Poverty

10 TRENDS THAT SHOULD BE ON YOUR BOARD'S RADAR

I HAVE VIVID MEMORIES, FROM THE YEARS I SPENT WORKING ON SOCIAL IMPACT IN-HOUSE FOR BIG BUSINESS, OF SCRAMBLING FOR A BOARD OR EXEC REPORT AROUND THIS TIME. 'PLEASE SUMMARISE THE KEY SOCIAL IMPACT TRENDS AND THE EFFECTS ON BUSINESS', WAS THE EXAM QUESTION. THIS YEAR, I THOUGHT I WOULD DO THE SAME FOR YOU. FEEL FREE TO BORROW, COMMENT AND ADD YOUR OWN.

Regardless of national government inertia, what actions can business take to meet the expectations of society in tackling this critical issue?

Ten things that caught my attention on the topic of business and social impact:

1. CLIMATE CHANGE GOES SOCIAL:

Global CEOs rank it as the biggest threat to business.¹⁵ But it has taken Greta Thunberg leading six million people to strike for the climate on one day to generate a feeling of real action.¹⁶ The global call for climate action has seen the rise of Extinction Rebellion;¹⁷ mass employee walkouts over corporate inaction¹⁸ and 1,020 jurisdictions in 19 countries declaring a climate emergency.¹⁹ Regardless of national government inertia, what actions can business take to meet the expectations of society in tackling this critical issue?

2. THE 'PURPOSE PARADIGM': SOLUTION OR SCAM?²⁰ V.S. THE RISE OF AUTHENTIC BUSINESS PURPOSE.

2019 got off to a rocky start for business purpose with Anand Giridharadas's book, "Winners Take All", gathering traction, which questioned the ability of business people to do anything but line their pockets. A steady momentum built through 2019 rejecting this pessimistic view, with 181 CEOs committing to lead their businesses for the benefit of all stakeholders,²¹ others steering their businesses to truly deliver shared value, and some joining the Business Fights Poverty Challenge to truly understand what it takes to deliver authentic business purpose. You can learn more about this Challenge and get involved by subscribing on the Business Fights Poverty website²².



3. FAKE NEWS, ALLEGATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL MEDDLING IN ELECTIONS AND THE PERSECUTION OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS.

We are just beginning to understand the impacts of misleading news. Questions over who you can trust and how easily voters can be manipulated are set to rise, with the issue perhaps risking all that liberal democracy represents. Whilst social media platforms wrestle with the problem,²³ courageous journalists are attacked, imprisoned or killed for exposing the truth.²⁴ Businesses – whatever their size – are threatened by fake news much in the same way as governments. It is becoming increasingly important to understand how to mitigate against and proactively engage with fake news, as well as plan for the consequences of voter manipulation.²⁵

4. WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVE FROM HASHTAG TO LAW.

It's two years since #MeToo started and Harvey Weinstein won't face criminal trial until 2020,²⁶ but the focus on gender equality is still strong. There is now a legally binding convention aimed at ending gender based violence and harassment in the world of work.²⁷ The gender pay gap has narrowed a smidgen, but is still embarrassingly large in most sectors, particularly if you are over 40.²⁸ The EU commission has elected its first female president.²⁹ Nevertheless, globally gender equality is disappointing and businesses are missing out.³⁰

5. MODERN-DAY SLAVERY IS ALIVE AND KICKING.

39 Vietnamese people found dead in a UK lorry brought modern slavery back to the headlines this year. The UN estimates 40.3 million people globally are living in slavery, with three-quarters "hidden" in global supply chains. Businesses are taking action,³¹ but the latest report suggests that 50% of companies are failing on their human rights responsibilities.³² Do watch for new legislation in 2020 as the EU is pressured to adopt business requirements in the fight against modern slavery.³³

2019 saw a continuation of global commitments to radically transform the plastics economy

6. ARE WE AT PEAK PLASTIC?

David Attenborough's narration as a sperm whale attempted to eat a discarded plastic bucket during Blue Planet II jolted the world. 2019 saw a continuation of global commitments to radically transform the plastics economy: over 400 companies have signed up to the New Plastics Economy;³⁴ 25 investment organisations representing US\$4 trillion are pushing for a circular plastics economy; whilst India has introduced a nationwide ban of single-use plastic.³⁵ The question – how do we create behaviour change across the value chain to ensure this makes a lasting global difference?



7. WHERE YOU COME FROM MATTERS.

In a year when Trump told four congresswomen to go back to where they came from,³⁶ and 95% fewer EU migrant workers came to the UK, in part thanks to Brexit³⁷ – the trend of anti-immigrant rhetoric seems likely to continue. Economic sense on migration is standing in contrast with the fear of unchecked immigration in national conversations. How will your business be affected by anti-immigration sentiment in 2020?

8. ONE STEP FORWARD IN LGBTQ+ EQUALITY, MANY STEPS BACK.

Botswana scraps the law banning gay sex, the UK formalises the teaching of LGBTQ+ in schools, and suicide rates fall by 46% in Sweden and Denmark attributed to openness around matters affecting the LGBTQ+ community. However, 80 countries still determine that being gay is illegal,³⁸ six carrying the death penalty,³⁹ whilst 331 trans people were killed for the way they are in 2019.⁴⁰ This continues to be a tricky balancing act for multinational businesses as they balance their international activities with their human rights values.

9. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ARE THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

Depression and anxiety cost our global economy an estimated US\$1 trillion per year.⁴¹ 64% of senior business people suffer from mental health issues.⁴² The good news: governments, business and civil society are increasingly talking about it. New Zealand has passed the world's first 'wellbeing budget'; the UK's Royal Family launched their campaign 'Every Mind Matters;' whilst in Japan, China and Malaysia, significant start-up technology and advertising activities are pushing for more emotional support.⁴³

10. THE RISE OF THE VEGAN.

Approx 0.4 % of people in the US declared themselves as vegan in 2015,⁴⁴ but by late 2018, 25% of 25-34 years olds in the US identified as vegan or vegetarian.⁴⁵ Vegan junk food, vegan supermarket aisles and vegan restaurants are increasingly prevalent, and even the Terminator himself, Arnold Schwarzenegger, is extolling the virtues of a plant-based diet.⁴⁶ Though a North American and European trend, it will have knock-on effects to global supply chains and to local farmers, if there really is a mass movement behind it.

64% of senior business people suffer from mental health issues. The good news: governments, business and civil society are increasingly talking about it

Of course there are issues that businesses will be facing that aren't on this short list of ten, whether the growing economic inequality; living wages; the accelerating shift in electric vehicles and their infrastructure; pollution; biodiversity; bribery and corruption. The list goes on.

I would therefore love to hear your thoughts on these issues. Which you are most concerned about, which you disagree with? So please do get in touch. You can do so, simply by emailing team@businessfightspoverty.org

Katie Hyson, Director of Thought Leadership, Business Fights Poverty

TACKLING RECRUITMENT-FEE DEBT BONDAGE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

MODERN SLAVERY IS OFTEN INVISIBLE, HIDDEN IN FACTORIES, SMALL FARMS, PLANTATIONS, OR SINGLE-OPERATOR BOATS SUPPLYING SEAFOOD. A CONSUMER GOODS COMPANY MAY BE MANY TIERS AWAY FROM WORKERS IN THESE SETTINGS. THIS MAKES MODERN SLAVERY VERY CHALLENGING TO DETECT – AND EVEN HARDER TO ERADICATE – IN THESE AND OTHER PARTS OF GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS.

Recruitment-fee debt bondage is the most widespread expression of modern slavery.⁴⁷ In many parts of the world, it is common for the costs of recruitment to be borne by the workers themselves. Other costs – for example, travel, visas and medical expenses – compound the problem. Workers go into debt to pay these up-front fees and costs, then find they can pay only the interest on the debt from their wages, with the debt tying them permanently to a role over which they have no control.

USING BLOCKCHAIN TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF WORKERS' CONTRACTS

Companies using mobile applications to hear directly from workers about their experiences can help to uncover hidden, illicit practices.⁴⁸ Another approach is to apply technology directly to bring greater transparency into recruitment systems.



Blockchain applications work best when they are used to answer the question: “Is the data you’re looking at the same as the data I’m looking at?” They ensure there is no manipulation in the transfer of data, creating transparency and resolving problems of fraud or other forms of abuse based on unauthorised changes in data.

For example, Diginex is a global blockchain solutions provider tackling issues that require considerable collaboration to deliver social impact. It is working with the International Organization for Migration⁴⁹ and The Mekong Club on ethical recruitment of migrant workers, developing the eMin⁵⁰ tool to ensure the transparency of workers’ contracts.

Such transparency is crucial for migrant workers, who often sign a contract in their



country of origin but may then find that contract has been changed by the time they arrive in a new, unfamiliar destination and begin work there. Diginex's approach enables an immutable copy of employment contracts and related data to be stored with the highest level of security on the Ethereum blockchain. Using a simple mobile screenshot, Diginex's tools enable the contract to be uploaded to a secure online data warehouse. The worker is given a hash – a unique code granting them access to their original contract from anywhere. This strengthens transparency through giving workers access to their own contracts and gives workers a robust basis for claiming the rights and benefits they were originally offered at the time of recruitment.

The eMin tool has been successfully piloted since February 2019 at a shrimp farm in Phuket, Thailand, in partnership with Verifik8⁵¹, a data intelligence and analytics provider for agribusiness suppliers. Following the pilot, Verifik8 will integrate eMin into its existing farming monitoring tools, called Blue 8/Green 8, which are already being used by 5,000 workers on farms in Thailand.⁵² Further expansion is planned into different sectors in Southeast Asia, Bangladesh and Bahrain.

APPLYING TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE SOCIAL AUDITING

The auditing community is interested in these approaches, with plans to trial a system with auditors early in 2020. This would, for example, enable auditors to investigate whether all the terms and benefits promised in a contract are being implemented in practice. The Mekong Club has also been applying another kind of technology to help strengthen worker voice within social audit processes.

Working with the United Nations University Institute in Macau⁵³, the organisation sought to apply mobile technology to overcome weaknesses in the traditional approach to interviewing workers for social audits. These flaws are often driven by time constraints during factory visits (with each interview typically taking 10 to 15 minutes) and compounded by a lack of privacy for

A recent evaluation showed that the app enhances workers' voice, in part through enabling greater confidentiality of responses

interviews. Language barriers are common, particularly when migrant workers are being interviewed, and auditors may select workers for interviews based on their language.

Apprise Audit⁵⁴ is a mobile app for auditors designed to overcome these concerns. It offers a standard set of questions available in audio in multiple languages – which allows for a more inclusive selection process – with workers' responses captured on the auditor's phone screen. It offers the auditor a real-time summary during the audit.

Apprise Audit has been tested by four major corporations in their supply chains for five months. A recent evaluation⁵⁵ showed that the app enhances workers' voice, in part through enabling greater confidentiality of responses (through the use of headphones), with the gamification of the on-screen response process putting workers, and particularly women and migrant workers, more at ease in giving feedback on their working conditions, compared with when talking directly to an auditor. The standardised questions and links with a content management system enable efficient and consistent data collection and retention and support analysis of factories' working conditions over time.



CONCLUSIONS

Technologies that enable transparency may be fundamental to tackling systemic opacity in recruitment and contracting systems. Lack of transparency in these systems contributes to modern slavery and makes it difficult to root out. These are areas in which blockchain-enabled tools may enhance trust, transparency and security by storing an immutable copy of workers' contracts and employment terms.

Strengthening auditors' engagement with workers through technology is improving the quality of social audit data, increasing the inclusion of marginalised workers' voices and making the auditing process more efficient. These are both strong examples of the application of technology to tackling modern slavery. Further work is needed to deploy these solutions at scale in complex, interconnected global supply chains.⁵⁶

Technologies that enable transparency may be fundamental to tackling systemic opacity in recruitment and contracting systems

To learn more about this topic, download 'Applying Technology To Help Eradicate Recruitment-Fee Debt Bondage In Global Supply Chains'⁵⁷. This report features six case studies, including more detail on Diginex's approach and on Apprise Audit. It was launched on 27 November in Geneva, with speakers from WBCSD, Nestlé, Diginex and Thomson Reuters Foundation exploring how these solutions might be applied in other settings and at greater scale.

.....
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2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

10 CHALLENGES

with 20 supporters and partners.

9 REPORTS

6 of which will be finalised over the coming weeks.

40 EVENTS

26 *in person*
(convening **1,159 people**) and...

14 *online events*
(convening **23,711**)

"yet another fantastic Business Fights Poverty event. The quality was, as always, superb."



233
ONLINE
ARTICLES

*and 15 podcast
interviews*

Across our large events:

95%

*of those surveyed
said they **rated them**
as **“GOOD”**
or **“EXCELLENT”***

Across our large events:

94%

*of those surveyed said
they **made a valuable**
connection*

Across our large events:

95%

*of those surveyed
said they **would**
recommend them
to a colleague*

Across our large events:

94%

*of those surveyed said
they **learnt something**
valuable*

*For the second year in a row:
Best for the World B Corp,
Best for Workers*



Best For
The World
2019 Workers
Honouree

SPOTLIGHT SERIES

WE ARE PROUD THAT BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY SPOTLIGHT INTERVIEWS HAVE BEEN RANKED NUMBER 5 IN THE “TOP 10 POVERTY PODCASTS YOU MUST FOLLOW IN 2019”!⁵⁸ THE PODCASTS PROVIDE YOU WITH INSIGHT FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE OF THE BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY NETWORK. KATIE HYSON, DIRECTOR OF THOUGHT LEADERSHIP, ASKS LEADERS FROM ACROSS THE SUSTAINABILITY, IMPACT, AND BUSINESS SPACE ABOUT THEIR LIFE AND WORK, FINDING OUT WHAT INSPIRES AND MOTIVATES THEM AND ASKING WHAT THEIR PREDICTIONS ARE FOR THE WAY BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY. EACH GIVES YOU FIRST-HAND UNDERSTANDING, INSIGHT AND POTENTIALLY USEFUL CAREER ADVICE FOR HOW YOU CAN HARNESS THE POWER OF BUSINESS TO FIGHT POVERTY

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These spotlight interviews are available as podcasts on the Business Fights Poverty website and also on iTunes⁵⁹. If you would like to be a part of our Spotlight Interview series or would like to nominate someone, please contact:

katie@businessfightspoverty.org



PRATHYUSHA PARAKALA,

Founder, Praana

This podcast marked the 150th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. On 2nd October 2019, India began a nationwide ban of single use plastic. Prathyusha Parakala, Hyderabad millennial, radio DJ and climate ambassador, joins us to share her first-hand experiences – about the wave of social and environmental actions sweeping across India.



NAUREEN HYAT,

Co-Founder, Tez Financial Services

We speak with Naureen Hyat, a serial entrepreneur ranked on the **Women in FinTech Powerlist 2017**. She is co-founder of **Tez Financial Services** – the first fully digital financial institution in Pakistan, providing frictionless financial access to the unbanked and underbanked. She has been an Assessor of the **SMART Campaign** – with the aim to accelerate financial inclusion. She is also a Pakistan Credit Rating Agency alumnus.



RAVINOL CHAMBERS

Founder, Be Inspired Films

Have you ever considered setting up a social enterprise or pondered how to deliver really impactful communications? If the answer is yes, then this podcast is for you. Ravinol Chambers, Founder of the B Corp, Be Inspired Films, takes listeners on his journey from aspirational stockbroker, to monk, to award-winning filmmaker and social entrepreneur; whilst arguably providing 25 minutes of free coaching.



HILARY COTTAM

Author, Innovator and Change Maker

Hilary's career may be varied, but her understanding of the welfare reform challenge is far-reaching. During this podcast Hilary explains the problems facing modern society and the mounting challenges of reducing poverty. An estimated **14.2 million** people live in poverty in the UK today, and this number is growing.



NATALIA PSHENICHNAYA

Head of Agritech Programme, GSMA

It's tough enough to keep up with mobile technology innovations in developed markets, where there are multi-million-pound marketing budgets to promote them. Natalia Pshenichnaya from the mobile industry association - **GSMA** takes us on a whistle stop tour of the innovations in mobile agricultural technology taking place in emerging markets. Technology that is not only providing connectivity but is lifting people out of poverty and saving lives

Business Fights Poverty Spotlight Interviews have been ranked number 5 in the "Top 10 Poverty Podcasts You Must Follow in 2019"

GENDER EQUALITY IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS:

HOW CAN COMPANIES ENGAGE MEN AS ALLIES ACROSS THE VALUE CHAIN?



THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY HAS ONLY TEN YEARS LEFT TO ACHIEVE THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5 ON GENDER EQUALITY. YET REPORTS SUGGEST THAT AT CURRENT RATES, THE TARGET IS UNLIKELY TO BE MET.⁶⁰

This is a challenge, not only for governments, multilaterals, not-for-profits and civil society but also for the business community. Business has a key role to play in working in partnership with others to advance gender equality, both within its own business operations and through action across its value chain.

In 2018, men held 77.5% of Fortune 500 board seats, while women held 22.5%.⁶¹ Indeed men continue to be over-represented at every level of leadership and management roles in large companies.⁶² While this is clearly problematic, it also offers an opportunity to involve men as allies for gender equality. There is also growing recognition of the importance of engaging men as allies with initiatives such as the UN's #HeforShe campaign, which has mobilised a global network of male champions. And there is growing evidence of the business benefits, with one study showing gender-diverse leadership teams are 21% more likely to outperform on profitability.⁶³

However, there is little guidance for companies that wish to integrate this approach into their gender equality efforts.

For this reason, and true to the spirit of Sustainable Development Goal 17 'Partnership for the Goals', Business Fights Poverty, AB InBev, CARE and Stanford University's VMware Women's Leadership Innovation Lab worked together to take a pulse check on the emerging area of engaging men as allies to advance gender

equality in business. The aim being to provide a simple playbook to inform senior business leaders with insights and guidance to take action.

This is a challenge, not only for governments, multilaterals, not-for-profits and civil society but also for the business community

WHY MEN?

The research found three key reasons why engaging men for gender equality in business is important. Firstly, recognising power and privilege; once men are aware of the privileges they hold they can assume a new responsibility to challenge the structures and systems at work that produce inequality and exclusion. Secondly, preventing harm; men and women's health can be negatively affected by current gender dynamics which may result in workplace cultures where excessive risk-taking and sexual harassment can thrive. Thirdly, accelerating progress; re-balancing men's work and home lives could significantly shift the existing care burden



that falls on women and is a major barrier to gender equality.

It is also important to note that if men *are not* engaged in advancing gender equality, it can potentially undermine efforts and slow down progress. Sometimes they may even actively oppose this work. For example, a national survey of microfinance clients in Bangladesh found that some women were actually more susceptible to domestic violence after receiving loans, as the men in their lives sought to control the money women received or to punish women who could not repay.⁶⁴

The research also found that a number of critical considerations must be taken into account when engaging men as allies. For example men must build on women's efforts and organisations and not replace them, and men must champion allyship, not be made champions.

WHY A VALUE CHAIN APPROACH?

Given their expansive value chains, large companies offer unique opportunities to shape and influence gender norms. From the research conducted, most company-led initiatives to engage men as allies have, to date, unsurprisingly been triggered by a desire to achieve greater parity in the workplace, often in traditionally 'male-dominated' sectors such as automobiles, beer, consulting and mining.⁶⁵

Two other emerging areas of action are in marketing and supply chain production. Businesses with large brands have begun to re-evaluate their advertising campaigns and challenge traditional gender stereotypes to future-proof their market share. This includes Carling Black Labels' 'No Excuse Campaign' to challenge violence against women in South Africa, and DoveMen+Care's campaign for a global paternity leave standard.

Companies which source or produce in developing countries have taken steps to economically empower women and have included a specific focus on how to engage men in the process. In Papua New Guinea, for

Given their expansive value chains, large companies offer unique opportunities to shape and influence gender norms

example, CARE helped to increase women's participation in coffee-related extension services from less than 5% to 44% over five years. Engaging male leaders in coffee companies and husbands on family-run coffee farms was crucial to this outcome, given women's roles were not previously recognised or valued by them.

There are many other potential opportunities to engage men as allies, including supplier diversity initiatives and product design. Indeed, leading companies could embed men as allies in their gender equality policies and programmes end to end across the value chain.

To effectively engage men as allies, companies need to look at supporting individual changes in attitudes and behaviours and ensure that organisational structures and policies are in place to support gender equality. They can also harness their indirect influence on wider society to shape gender norms through advertising and influencing government policies. The full Challenge report provides a variety of tools and approaches on how to do this and will be available in the New Year.

Men and women working together for gender equality will ultimately bring benefits to all genders, to business, and to society as a whole.

If you would like to be among the first to receive a copy of the final report, please be sure to sign up to the Challenge.⁶⁶

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Alice Allan, Challenge Director, Business Fights Poverty, **Pamela Cornes**, Director of Social Impact, AB InBev, **Fabio Verani**, Senior Technical Advisor, Gender program, CARE USA, **Marianne Cooper**, VMware Women's Leadership Innovation Lab, Stanford University

5 REFLECTIONS

**ON HOW INTERNATIONAL DONORS
HELP BUSINESSES SCALE THEIR
CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS:**



THE SCALE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE CHALLENGES AHEAD OF US REQUIRE A NEW AMBITION FOR HOW WE COLLABORATE ACROSS TRADITIONAL DIVIDES. AT BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY NYC 2019, WE BROUGHT TOGETHER EXPERTS AND PRACTITIONERS FROM BUSINESS AND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY FOR A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ABOUT HOW WE CAN PARTNER MORE EFFECTIVELY TO DELIVER THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS).



The session was part of a wider Challenge⁶⁷ supported by the UK's Department for International Development. This article summarises some of the key themes that emerged during the conversation in New York.

A common theme across successful partnerships - is the importance of taking a joint approach to framing and understanding the issue, the theory of change and therefore the priorities for action

NESS FIGHTS POVERTY

NYC 2019

Where social impact solutions are also commercially sustainable, there is a greater chance of scale and long-term impact

1. THE URGENT NEED

All participants recognised the significance of this moment in which no country is currently on track to meet the full set of SDGs, and where some estimate the financing gap to be as high as \$400 billion. Breakthrough innovation is needed to achieve (and to bring down the cost of achieving) our ambitions for healthcare, education and the other internationally agreed priorities.

Perhaps the single most important challenge ahead is achieving scale. For all those organisations actively engaged in driving social and environmental action through their programmes and policies, moving from deep programme-level impacts towards wider, system-level change is the next frontier for collaboration. A central question for donors is how they can incentivise and support this sort of system-level collective action.

2. COLLABORATING FOR IMPACT

Participants in the room, from across sectors and geographies, described exciting new ways in which governments and businesses are collaborating on issues, ranging from tackling the gender gap in accessing the mobile internet to enhancing access to better nutrition. Across the board, there is a desire to think bigger about what can be achieved together.

In every case, each player is having to take a fresh look at what they and others can bring to the table, whether that is sharing knowledge about the problem being tackled; contributing technical skills and on-the-ground capabilities to translate policy into action; or developing new models of blended finance and sharing risk.

One exciting development, highlighted by a number of people in the room, is the wave of young entrepreneurs who are bringing new energy and ideas to tackle some of society's most pressing and seemingly intractable issues. Thinking about how to support, mentor and partner with these entrepreneurs should be a priority for donors and larger businesses. Drone delivery of health supplies was given as one example.

3. SHARED OUTCOMES

A common theme across successful partnerships – whether between two or multiple partners – is the importance of taking a joint approach to framing and understanding the issue, the theory of change and therefore the priorities for action. This unlocks the opportunity to move from transactional to transformational partnerships, something we explored around the time of last year’s New York event.⁶⁸

Being clear about the outcome also opens the opportunity for greater flexibility in how to get there, and a franker discussion about what is working well and what needs to change. Focus on outcomes provides an incentive to fail fast, adapt and adjust approaches, and the safe space needed to discuss trade-offs and practical challenges. All those in the room expressed a genuine interest in learning from each other and exploring what works and what does not.

Being clear about the challenge we are looking to tackle creates the right focus for identifying and bringing together the right players

In getting to a shared outcome, a number of participants flagged an important lesson from their experience: the most effective partnerships are where there is a benefit for all those collaborating. As one government donor in the room said, “Donors should not be shy of business interests”. Where social impact solutions are also commercially sustainable, there is a greater chance of scale and long-term impact.



4. PLAYING TO YOUR STRENGTH

Being clear about the challenge we are looking to tackle also creates the right focus for identifying and bringing together the right players. One example highlighted was a partnership between the World Food Programme⁶⁹, a nutrition company, a logistics company, and a digital payments company, each bringing their unique insights, data and skills in a coordinated and concerted way. Another example was given of a beverage company applying its expertise in distribution to enhance the effectiveness of national health systems.

In the context of these partnerships, businesses bring new sources of innovation around new products and services or new business models that bring down the costs of meeting needs. They bring skills and local market knowledge, as well as finance that can leverage the investment of donors.

In discussing what donors bring to the table, participants highlighted their depth of understanding of development issues, with knowledge and technical know-how a key value-add. At the same time, people

Storytelling can help shift hearts and minds in support of the need to work together

highlighted their important convening power and networks, which can be harnessed to bring together pre-competitive conversations and collaborations.

A significant part of our conversation focused on another important role for donors: putting risk capital on the table in the form of match funding, for example, to encourage businesses to try new or different approaches with the potential for greater impact. One participant gave the example of the Dutch model of “convertible grants”, whereby a business repays the grant with a premium if (and only if) the project succeeds. This enables companies to fund a “validation phase” of an innovation and gives the space for learning from the failures that sometimes come with trying something different. As one participant said, “It takes lots of tries to get to scale”.

5. WORKING EFFECTIVELY

All of those at our roundtable have been involved in business-donor partnerships for many years and all had ideas for how the process of partnering could be improved and made easier.

A number of people highlighted the burdens and lack of standardisation around monitoring and evaluation (M&E). A key to effective M&E, one participant felt, is aligning impact KPIs with business-relevant feedback from customers; giving businesses a clear incentive to measure what is most effective by supporting the pathway to commercial viability. It was felt M&E should also support long-term progress, not just short-term quick wins.

Participants felt it is important to leverage and build upon existing partnerships. The first step for any donor or business should be to ask what other partnerships are already running. A key takeaway from the session was a recognition that we need to do more to map out what is already happening, such as around the various de-risking funds that are already available.

An interesting point was made about the need to build the story around collaborative action more effectively, including across a wider audience. Storytelling can help shift hearts and minds in support of the need to work together, and to support the effectiveness of the change these collaborations are seeking to drive.

.....
Zahid Torres-Rahman, Co-Founder and CEO, Business Fights Poverty

GET INVOLVED

We are keen to hear your views, insights and examples. Please get in touch with us via team@businessfightspoverty.org and register⁷⁰ for our Challenge on Business-Donor Partnerships to access resources and receive the latest updates around this conversation.

FUTURE OF WORK

HOW CAN BUSINESS ACCELERATE CAREER OPPORTUNITY FOR ENTRY-LEVEL WORKERS TO ENSURE THE FUTURE OF WORK IS STRONG AND INCLUSIVE?

DURING BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY NYC 2019, A SELECT GROUP OF PROFESSIONALS FROM BUSINESS, ACADEMIA AND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY EXPLORED HOW COMPANIES ARE RESPONDING TO DISRUPTIVE TRENDS AFFECTING THE FUTURE OF WORK, SUCH AS AUTOMATION, THE RISE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND NEW FORMS OF INDEPENDENT EMPLOYMENT AND HOW COMPANIES ARE PREPARING THEIR WORKFORCE FOR THESE TRANSITIONS. THIS SESSION WAS PART OF A CHALLENGE SUPPORTED BY WALMART.

People-centric visions for the future should include the wider ecosystem of suppliers, customers, and local communities, as well as potential collaborators

COMPANIES NEED A PEOPLE-CENTRIC COMMITMENT AND VISION FOR HOW THEIR WORKPLACE WILL CHANGE

All businesses need to be thinking ahead to help workers stay relevant, by articulating a clear people-centric commitment and a proactive vision of how their workplace will change and how it will impact their people. Company visions should put their people at the heart of these changes, with technology acting as an enabler to improve the human experience of work, for example through better training, new career opportunities,

and digital enablement of workers in all jobs. We must act now to identify the capabilities and skills that workers will need and support people through the transition. People-centric visions for the future should include the wider ecosystem of suppliers, customers, and local communities, as well as potential collaborators – for example, other companies working in the same region or industry.





SUPPORTING WORKERS THROUGH THE TRANSITION

The set of skills required is also evolving, and we realise that the need for soft skills is increasing as the content and type of jobs evolve. Businesses are uniquely positioned to help workers build these soft skills – such as digital literacy, data-based decision making, collaboration, and empathetic customer service. It is also critical for businesses to foster a “culture of life-long learning”, including by making on-the-job training and intentional career pathways a more central part of the overall mix of workforce training. In an environment of rapid job and task transformation, businesses are often best positioned to provide the most relevant and agile training. This works best when employees have transparent incentives – and customisable options – to take responsibility for their own career development. This could include on-the-clock classroom and practicum training, financial support, time, social learning, and incentives for learning. It is particularly important to recognise the substantial social inclusion benefit of businesses providing on-the-job training and career development for workers who have previously struggled in formal education or who are otherwise suffering from barriers to engagement in learning activities.

... we realise that the need for soft skills is increasing as the content and type of jobs evolve

To motivate staff, companies should espouse a clear sense of social purpose, so that all employees understand the contribution of their role to a greater goal. It is also vital to broaden routes for career progression and consider career experiences that go beyond the traditional career path, opening up more opportunities for workers to move laterally across functions and between sectors, as well as vertically up the career hierarchy, both within a business and from one business to other work. Secondments are also a great way to grow skills and foster learning agility. These can be internal secondments across different departments and markets, as well as externally through partnerships with the non-profit and public sectors.

Our Challenge Partner, Walmart, outlined at the session initiatives and programmes it has developed that provide its people with career development opportunities to help them grow further in their career and to acquire new skills. The Pathways Program⁷¹ has provided foundational learning for new workers to explain the retail model and build soft skills. In addition, over 200 Walmart

Academies⁷² have trained over 500,000 associates over the last four years, using classroom and sales floor exercises to teach advanced retail skills. Academy training grows confidence, improves job satisfaction, and boosts Associates' marketable skills so that they can better progress in their careers. Initial data suggest that retention increases for both graduates of Academy training and for their teams. To remove barriers to higher education, Walmart creates access to debt-free higher education through its Live Better U⁷³ programme in partnership with Guild Education⁷⁴, enabling associates to enrol in online degree programmes in business and technology for a dollar a day. All Walmart's initiatives are underpinned by its learning culture, expressed in the maxim “Thirty for Learning”, which encourages all associates – even those who feel unable to take on significant training – to allocate half an hour per week for their own development.

Businesses are shifting their mindset to look beyond their own organisations to develop a wider pool of talent which benefits everyone.

Businesses are shifting their mindset to look beyond their own organisations to develop a wider pool of talent which benefits everyone. Some may fear that their training investment may be



Supporting entry-level workers to thrive in the future of work requires us all to play our part, through collaboration between business, governments and non-profit sectors.

lost when staff leave the company, but our participants reported that, on the contrary, such investment has a positive impact on recruitment and staff retention. Collaboration between businesses and across sectors can help share the cost of developing transferable skills needed across the board. Given the rise of more flexible models of employment, such as the gig economy and freelancing, business needs to consider how they tap into a wider talent pool, and what their responsibility is to develop workers operating outside traditional employment.

CREATE “UNLIKELY PARTNERSHIPS” TO MAKE AN IMPACT AT SCALE

Businesses are considering how to collaborate more – either across industries or with governments or non-profit sectors – and to create “unlikely partnerships” which can make an impact at scale. For example, businesses could provide baseline skills assessments of entry-level employees to government and help shape education policy that is fit-for-purpose for the new era of work. Many examples of companies were shared where they have been collaborating and providing support or collaboration on access to education and mentoring for young people. Companies are also contributing to the formalisation and stability of emerging economies by integrating small and medium-sized businesses into their supply chains, providing them support and working

together to continually raise global minimum standards in relation to benefits systems and social safety nets. Supporting entry-level workers to thrive in the future of work requires us all to play our part, through collaboration between business, governments and non-profit sectors.

How are you supporting your entry-level workers to thrive in the future of work? If you would like to contribute your ideas and experience to the Future of Work Challenge, please register your interest by subscribing to join the Challenge⁷⁵.

Ophelia Johns, Challenge Director,
Business Fights Poverty

SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS IT?

AS WORLD LEADERS AND ACTIVISTS GATHERED IN NEW YORK LAST MONTH TO ADDRESS THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND THE FALTERING RATE OF PROGRESS TOWARD THE UN'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS), THE CALLS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE ARE GETTING EVER LOUDER. SYSTEMS CHANGE IS AN INSPIRING GOAL – BUT HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?

Transforming a complex system – such as the energy, health or food system – is a monumental task requiring coordinated action by people with very different viewpoints. Systems change initiatives often engage hundreds of organisations – governments, companies, civil society organisations, worker associations, research institutions and others – combining their capacities to achieve a shared goal.

These large-scale initiatives are often driven and supported by people who fit a certain profile – those who are able to catalyse and empower collective action among others, rather than controlling or directing the action themselves. These people are increasingly described as systems leaders.

We studied examples of systems leaders working on diverse issues around the world and found some striking similarities. Systems leaders – whether they are global leaders or community activists, working in Europe, Asia, Africa or the Americas – often apply a similar set of tactics and have similar experiences leading large, complex initiatives. We summarised some of the key elements and success factors of systems leadership in a new report⁷⁶ in the interest of encouraging others in the global community to apply and refine this approach.

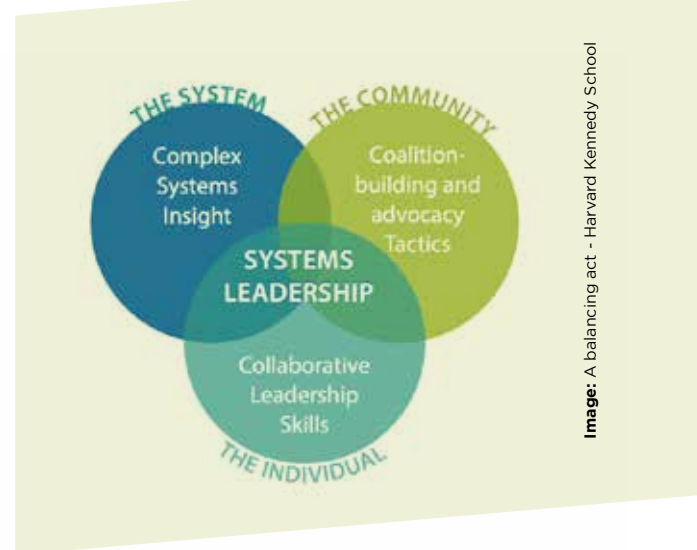


Image: A balancing act - Harvard Kennedy School

SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP: A TOOL FOR OUR TIMES

Systems leadership is a set of skills and capacities that any individual or organisation can use to catalyse, enable and support the process of systems-level change. It combines collaborative leadership, coalition-building and systems insight to mobilise innovation and action across a large, decentralised network.

Two very different examples illustrate what it can look like in practice. The 2015 Paris Agreement, signed by 195 countries with support from thousands of organisations, was spearheaded by



Christiana Figueres, a global diplomat who emphasised practicality, flexibility and collaboration to bring stakeholders on board, securing a historic agreement. At a more local level in Richmond, California, a community organiser named Najari Smith founded a new venture called Rich City Rides⁷⁷, galvanising community members, local businesses and city government to address the interconnected challenges of employment, health and environmental sustainability among low-income communities of colour in the city.

These two leaders operated in very different spheres, but they used some similar tactics: combining a deep understanding of the systemic issues they wanted to address; an ability to engage and align diverse stakeholders around shared goals; and an emphasis on empowering action and collaboration by a broad network of organisations.

We distilled five key elements of the systems change process into the 'CLEAR' framework for leading systems change

Systems leaders apply an unusual combination of skills and attributes to mobilise large-scale action for systems change. Like many leaders, they tend to be smart, ambitious visionaries with strong skills in management and execution. Unlike traditional leaders, they are often humble, good listeners and skilled facilitators who can successfully engage stakeholders with highly divergent priorities and perspectives. Systems leaders see their role as catalysing, enabling and supporting widespread action – rather than occupying the spotlight themselves.

SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

The systems leadership approach is well-suited to complex challenges that require collective action, where no single entity is in control. However, the approach is challenging – involving high transaction costs, ambiguous outcomes and long timeframes. It is best applied to complex issues that cannot be solved through more direct means.

We distilled five key elements of the systems change process into the 'CLEAR' framework for leading systems change. These five elements are not necessarily sequential – they may overlap or repeat in cycles throughout the course of an initiative.

1. CONVENE AND COMMIT

Key stakeholders engage in moderated dialogue to address a complex issue of mutual concern. They define shared interests and goals and commit to working together in new ways to create systemic change. For example, the We Mean Business Coalition⁷⁸ engaged nearly 1,000 leading companies to advocate for ambitious, science-based climate policy, and has made over 1,500 action commitments.

2. LOOK AND LEARN

Through system mapping, stakeholders jointly build a shared understanding of the components, actors, dynamics and influences that create the system and its current outcomes, generating new insights and ideas. For example, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition⁷⁹ targets specific gaps in the nutrition system, working to catalyse and scale market-based solutions and targeting vulnerable populations who are most in need.

3. ENGAGE AND ENERGISE

Strong stakeholder engagement is built through continuous communication to build trust, commitment, innovation and collaboration. Inspiration, incentives and milestones help drive progress and maintain momentum. For example, the New Vision for Agriculture initiative⁸⁰ engaged over 650 organisations and 1,500 individual leaders around the world, catalysing action in 21 countries including over 90 value-chain projects.

4. ACT WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

Shared goals and principles set the direction of the initiative, while measurement frameworks help track progress. Coordination and governance structures can be developed as initiatives mature. For example, the Every Woman Every Child movement⁸¹ mobilised hundreds of action commitments towards its global strategy, monitoring progress through a unified accountability framework, with oversight from a high-level steering group and coordination by a global secretariat.

5. REVIEW AND REVISE

Stakeholders review progress regularly and adapt their strategy accordingly. Adopting an agile, flexible, innovative and learning-centred approach allows for evolution and experimentation. For example, the 2030 Water Resources Group⁸² evolved its organisational structure through several stages, commissioning external evaluations to both review its progress and recommend opportunities to increase its impact.

Many stakeholders describe the experience of systems leadership as a journey of discovery that evolves over time

While the CLEAR Framework appears quite structured, the reality of the systems change process is often messy and ambiguous. Many stakeholders describe the experience of systems leadership as a journey of discovery that evolves over time, leading to moments of discovery or insight – what we describe as ‘Aha! moments’ – that crystallise each step of the journey.

MAINSTREAMING THE SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP APPROACH

While the concept of systems leadership makes intuitive sense to many stakeholders, it is not yet widely embraced and practised. Mainstreaming its application will require a broader and more coordinated effort to develop research, share knowledge and build capacity. A number of philanthropists, consultancies and academics are active on these fronts, but they are not always well-connected. New platforms are needed to connect practitioners and experts, share insights and accelerate learning to support a wider array of organisations in applying systems leadership to advance progress toward the SDGs.

.....
Lisa Drier, Senior Program Fellow, and **Jane Nelson**, Director, Corporate Responsibility Initiative, Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and **David Nabarro**, Director, 4SD

GET INVOLVED

FREE TICKETS

to our events are available to those members who have taken up a speaking opportunity or who volunteer to support the running of an event via our Ambassador Programme.

EVERYTHING WE DO AT BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY IS DRIVEN BY A BELIEF IN THE POWER OF PURPOSEFUL COLLABORATION - THE SIMPLE IDEA THAT WHEN YOU BRING TOGETHER THE RIGHT PEOPLE AROUND A CLEAR, SHARED CHALLENGE, WITH A FOCUS ON DELIVERING A TANGIBLE, VALUABLE OUTPUT IN A CLEAR TIMEFRAME, YOU CREATE THE SPACE FOR GENERATING POWERFUL INSIGHTS AND DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS.

Since we started on our journey in 2005, we have learnt a great deal about collaboration. Most important is the understanding of the huge potential that lies in connecting practitioners and experts across sectors, organisations and geographies. We are grateful for the engagement of our network of over 20,000 professionals and close to 100 content partners.

We encourage you to get involved - whether that is sharing your insights and stories through an article for our website, creating a community profile to help others connect with you, joining one of our monthly online discussions, attending one of our many in-person gatherings, or joining one of our collaborative Challenges.

Our Challenge approach brings together people from across our community and beyond who are passionate about tackling specific societal issues. Each Challenge starts by convening the best people from (and beyond) our global network; co-creating a solution through an interactive process of engagement and analysis that leads to a valuable output within a clear timeframe of 3 to 9 months; and communicating the outputs in a targeted way.

We have run nearly 30 Challenges on a wide variety of topics ranging from farmer livelihoods to corporate social innovation, from advocacy partnerships to scaling inclusive distribution models. We are currently working Challenges focused on:

- **How can consumer goods companies harness technology to most effectively tackle modern slavery in their global supply chains?**
- **What more can international donors do to increase business' contribution to the SDGs?**
- **How can business accelerate career opportunity for entry-level workers to ensure the future of work is strong and inclusive?**
- **How can we embed purpose authentically into business?**
- **How can business advance gender equality across the value chain by engaging men as allies?**

We are exploring potential Challenges on impact measurement, future skills and women's empowerment. If you have a new idea, please get in touch with us at team@businessfightspoverty.org.

If you work for a university, thinktank or NGO, please consider joining us as a Content Partner. If you are looking to showcase the work you are doing or share your ideas with the business and sustainable development community, becoming a Content Partner is a unique opportunity to build a meaningful conversation with our audience of professionals.

To find out more about becoming a Content Partner, contact anna@businessfightspoverty.org



<https://snipbfp.org/l4Events>

LEARN MORE

Jan

ONLINE DISCUSSION: HOW CAN WE LEVERAGING

TECHNOLOGY TO ADDRESS MODERN SLAVERY IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS?

JAN (TBC) 15:00 – 16:00 GMT /
10:00 – 11:00 EST

This discussion will explore experiences of the use of technology to address human rights and modern slavery in global supply chains. We will review the lessons emerging from new case studies published as part of a Business Fights Poverty Challenge with Nestlé and WBCSD, which explore what it takes in practice to make technology effective in this area, from mobile applications for worker engagement, through to the use of blockchain to increase transparency in recruitment and contracting processes.

Jan

ONLINE DISCUSSION: WHAT CAN BUSINESS DO TO STRENGTHEN

MSME ECOSYSTEMS IN FRONTIER MARKETS?

JAN (TBC) 15:00 – 16:00 GMT /
10:00 – 11:00 EST

Given the multiple systemic constraints MSMEs face, there is growing recognition that all those organisations with a stake in their success – large companies, governments, donors and funders, and NGOs – need to move towards a more holistic and joined-up approach to enterprise support, with the goal of strengthening the underlying ecosystem in which MSMEs operate. This session will explore practical ways that large companies and their partners can make this shift on the ground.

EVENT: BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY WASHINGTON DC 2020:

15 APR 9:00 – 17:00 EDT

15/4

Join us for an inspiring and action-focused event on how business, government and civil society are collaborating to deliver social impact. Timed to coincide with the World Bank and IMF Spring Meetings, our annual invite-only Business Fights Poverty DC event brings together 150 senior business professionals and development partners. The event combines inspiring panel discussions with opportunities for genuine peer engagement and networking. The event is supported by IFC

EVENT: BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY OXFORD 2020

16 JUL 9:00 – 18:00 BST

16/7

This annual invite-only Business Fights Poverty Oxford event brings together over 300 senior business professionals and development partners. 2020 is a pivotal year for gender equality. Business Fights Poverty Oxford will include a dedicated Zone on Women's Economic Empowerment to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We welcome proposals from our supporters and partners on the themes for other Zones.

21/9

EVENT: BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY NYC 2020

21 SEP 9:30 – 14:30 EDT

With only ten years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), join us for this inspiring and action-focused half-day event on how business, government and civil society are collaborating to deliver the SDGs by 2030. Timed to coincide with the UN General Assembly, our annual invite-only Business Fights Poverty NYC event brings together 150 senior business professionals and development partners. The event combines inspiring panel discussions with opportunities for genuine peer engagement and networking. The event will include a set of themed collaboration lunches.

12/11

EVENT: BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY LONDON 2020

12 NOV 9:30 – 14:30 GMT

Towards the end of the year, we will reflect on the commitments made throughout 2020 and how business, government and civil society are rethinking their collaborations. This annual invite-only Business Fights Poverty London event brings together 100 senior business professionals and development partners. The event combines inspiring panel discussions with opportunities for genuine peer engagement and networking. The event is supported by Credit Suisse.

2019 HIGHLIGHTS AND 2020 THOUGHTS

WE ASKED THE BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY COMMUNITY ABOUT THEIR HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2019 AND EXPECTATIONS FOR 2020



OPHELIA JOHNS,
*Challenge Director:
Future of Work:*

“Companies are assessing how disruptive trends – such as the rise in AI, automation and new forms of independent employment – are impacting the Future of Work. As jobs change, skills requirements will also evolve, with a growing emphasis on ‘human skills’ such as problem-solving and management. There is a clear need for collaboration across industries and sectors to help workers build transferable skills and prepare them for the transition.”



VITTORIO CERULLI,
*Challenge Director:
Authentic Purpose:*

“I am impressed by the work done by the French government. With new legislation (PACTE), it redefined the term ‘company’ in the French Civil Code to include purpose beyond profit: ‘Companies do more than simply seek to make a profit. The PACTE will modify the Civil Code in order to assert their social and environmental role and provide them with a true *raison d’être*’.”



JOSIAH KAPLAN PhD,
*Senior Research and
Innovation Advisor,
Migration and Displacement
Initiative, Save the Children*

2019 was an exciting year for the evolution of Save the Children’s MDI (Migration and Displacement Initiative) innovation agenda – now consolidated under our new Migration and Displacement Innovation Platform (MDIP). First, building off insights from the original predictive displacement prototype, we now have a dedicated team driving software development, to harness a wider

range of data sets and cutting edge analytical methodologies to improve our model’s accuracy in predicting duration and scale of conflict-induced mass displacement. Second, the 2019 MDIP innovation sprint resulted in new concepts to mitigate child displacement in several domains including mental health and psychosocial support, education and refugee-youth livelihood. Third, the MDI launched its toolkit for child-sensitive durable solutions, including a child-focused indicator framework, in addition to guidance for programming, policy and advocacy around child return, resettlement and reintegration⁸⁴.



ALICE ALLEN,
*Challenge Director:
Men as Allies and
Gender Based Violence:*

“My 2019 highlight has to be the fact that despite ongoing global political turmoil and questioning of multilateralism, governments, business and unions came together at the International Labour Organisation in June to agree a new legally binding treaty to end violence and harassment in the world of work. It was heartening that Business Fights Poverty played a small role in this – joining forces with 30 other businesses and networks to advocate for a progressive treaty ahead of the final negotiations.”



LIZ FOGGITT,
*Communications
Manager, Twin &
Twin Trading:*

“We’re a Fairtrade business with transparent supply chains – during 2019 we received far more sales enquiries. It seems that more people are interested in the supply chain and want to source ethically. We have also noticed more consideration of and demand for packaging that can be recycled. For the first time, we worked closely with Tesco to launch a Christmas product that meets their packaging specifications but can also be recycled. This project laid the foundations for us to shift all our packaging in 2020.”



YVETTE TORRES-RAHMAN, *Business Fights Poverty:*

"2020 is a pivotal year for gender equality. Business Fights Poverty Oxford 2020 will include a dedicated Zone on Women's Economic Empowerment to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action."



GIB BULLOCH, *Intrapreneur in Residence, Business Fights Poverty:*

"My standout event of 2019 was our first #DeceleratorLab on the Isle of Bute, as part of the plan to create a "Business Decelerator" on the island. It turned out to be a tremendous success - beyond even my highest expectations. We had a total of 36 people involved from corporates such as Deloitte, Standard Chartered, Reckitt Benckiser and Accenture, nonprofits such as Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and five people from the local community who were given free places and turned out to be complete stars. We were intergenerational, with ages ranging from 22 to 75 and deliberately blurred the boundaries between the sectors and even between trainer and trainee. It was amazing to watch as people opened up to new possibilities for themselves and their organisations/communities through exposure to art, music, improv, comedy and nature (some were even swimming in the sea)."



DAVID GRAYSON, *Circle of Advisors, Business Fights Poverty:*

"One positive news item in 2019 was around the G7 Summit in Biarritz, with the launch of the B4IG: Business for Inclusive Growth Platform. A group of major international businesses has pledged to tackle inequality and promote diversity in their workplaces and supply chains as part of a G7 initiative, led by French President Emmanuel Macron and overseen by the OECD. It involves Danone and 33 other major companies. It is a welcome recognition that alongside tackling the Climate Emergency, we also simultaneously have to address the systemic risks from hyper global inequalities."



JAMES MILTZER, *NextBillion Editor and Video Manager,*

William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan:

"It's been interesting to see how the off-grid energy sector has built upon its momentum, in part by branching out into the financial inclusion space through the pay-as-you-go model and microloans for solar units. This approach (i.e.: partnerships between business sectors sharing a focus on low-income customers) seems to be growing in importance. It will be interesting to see what happens when the business interests of these different players make competition more attractive than collaboration - for instance, if the financial products offered by off-grid energy companies lure customers away from dedicated mobile money or microfinance providers."



VIDYA RANGAN, *Impacts and Evidence Senior Manager, ISEAL*

"The increase in impact evaluation studies backed up by strong research designs has helped us understand how, and to what extent, standards are responsible for driving impacts on specific issues. The idea that there is no evidence about standards just isn't true anymore. The growing body of research on evidensia.eco shows that standards systems can and do have positive impacts; however, not in every place, on every outcome, or every scale - we need to think carefully about what works well in what situations and what doesn't work so well."



ANDY WHALES,
*Circle of Advisors,
Business Fights
Poverty*

“As I reflect back on 2019 and start to plan for the year ahead, a stand out event for me was the first investments made under the Advance Fund - a partnership between the Global Innovation Fund and Unilever. Advance provides a way to unlock private sector investment needed to scale new business models for the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which present new market opportunities and new jobs. The Advance growth model aims to take viable business models to ‘scale ready’ enterprises, by taking smart risks and driving change through market shifts - including water and sanitation services, which need new business models to make them work for those living on less than \$5 a day.

This year, investments were made under Advance in Drinkwell, a social enterprise aiming to provide access to affordable and clean drinking water for millions of underserved urban customers for the first time; and Mr Green Africa, a recycling business that integrates marginalised waste collectors into a fair-trade system. I look forward to seeing Advance progress in 2020.”



CHRISTIAN JAHN
*Executive Director,
iBAN*

“We believe that business reduces poverty effectively when governments put the right support mechanisms and enabling framework in place. Building on the work of the G20, iBAN began supporting policy makers in laying the groundwork for inclusive business policies in Southeast Asia just two short years ago. Already as of today, 6 out of 10 ASEAN Member Countries have explicitly committed themselves to inclusive business and a growing number of countries are joining the movement. In 2020 we will take these lessons learnt to Sub-Saharan Africa and we look forward to seeing more and better collaboration between the business and policy world globally.”



JENIFER MORGAN,
*Contributing Editor,
Stanford Social
Innovation Review*

While NGOs or global foundations usually come to mind when people think of “leaders in social innovation,” we are seeing more and more businesses developing promising, original solutions to global challenges like poverty alleviation. The magazine’s recent Winter 2020 issue contains two articles that spotlight how businesses are helping raise the living standards of farmers in very different parts of the world. “Ecosystem Services Market Consortium Credits Farmers for Caring for the Environment” by noted journalist Sarah Murray discusses how 11 organizations, including major corporations like Cargill and MacDonald’s, helped form a new consortium to develop a trading system that enables US farmers to use improvements in soil health—the key to water conservation and soil carbon sequestration—to generate ecosystem-service credits they can sell. “Can the Harambe Entrepreneur Alliance Eradicate Poverty in Africa?” shares examples of how a network of more than 300 entrepreneurs from 34 countries in Africa believes that business, rather than aid, is the key to eradicating poverty on the continent. Find these stories and more at ssir.org.

ENDNOTES

- 1** Feedspot (November, 2019) Top 10 Poverty Podcasts You Must Follow in 2019, Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/I4Editor>
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