COLLABORATING FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

CHALLENGES
Founded over 10 years ago, we energise open collaboration around specific, fast-paced Challenges. We bring together the best thinkers and the most passionate practitioners from across our network of tens of thousands of business, non-profit and government professionals.

Together we drive action to unlock new opportunities for poor and marginalised people around the world.

The Business Fights Poverty community is committed to turning the promises of the Sustainable Development Goals into reality, one Challenge at a time.

WHAT IS YOUR CHALLENGE?
Get in touch with us at team@businessfightspoverty.org
Our Methodology

1. Identify a specific challenge that stands in the way
2. Bring together the best minds to tackle it
3. Work purposefully and rapidly
4. Find a specific solution
5. Share and learn
6. Fight poverty

Collaborating for social impact, one challenge at a time
HOW CAN WE STRENGTHEN MICRO-ENTERPRISES IN VALUE CHAINS?

THE CHALLENGE
Micro-enterprises play an essential role in company value chains and in communities. However, many micro-enterprises are struggling to survive and have to contend with multiple challenges.

There is growing recognition that no single company, government, donor, or civil society organisation can help micro-enterprises to overcome challenges by providing support on its own. To succeed in the long run, in large numbers, micro-enterprises need a supportive community of organisations working together to remove the multiple barriers to success.

THE OUTPUT
The Challenge will develop a Framework and Guidelines to help companies and their development partners enable micro-enterprises within value chains to thrive—and thereby improve business performance and development impact. The Framework will be used to: advocate for greater coordination and collaboration and more systemic approaches, including a more supportive policy environment; guide business’ internal organisational strategy, policies and procedures, and programme design; and provide a framework for collaboration, with practical examples from participants’ combined pool of experience and their networks.

SUPPORTED BY
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
Inter-American Development Bank, Accenture Development Partnerships, CARE International UK, Harvard Kennedy School Corporate Responsibility Initiative
HOW CAN COMPANIES SUPPORT WOMEN ACROSS THEIR VALUE CHAINS AND BEYOND?

THE CHALLENGE

The issue of women's economic empowerment is attracting renewed interest following the launch, in January 2016, of the first-ever UN High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment.

The former UK Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening, is a Panel member and DFID is supporting the Panel’s secretariat and the associated consultation process.

This Challenge, in partnership with CARE International UK, draws on the combined experience of business and NGO partners to identify how companies most effectively empower women. This includes what can be done through companies' value chains, internal policies and practices, external marketing and customer engagement, and actions to tackle wider systemic constraints, such as women's care obligations and access to finance.

THE OUTPUT

The first phase of the Challenge culminated in a briefing pack summarising key messages from various consultation events, which were fed into preparations for the High Level Panel meeting in Costa Rica. The briefing pack included 9 case studies as well as recommendations for action.

A second round of consultation will commence after the release of the Panel’s first report, and will focus on implications and implementation of the Report's recommendations.
HOW CAN WE SCALE DISTRIBUTION AND SALES NETWORKS THAT CREATE OPPORTUNITIES AT THE BoP?

THE CHALLENGE

While inclusive business offers the prospect of combining business and poverty alleviation in a sustainable and scalable way, the majority of inclusive business models have remained small. There is a need to better understand the models that have reached considerable scale and the key factors contributing to their success.

New models of inclusive distribution have emerged that seek to enhance opportunities for low income individuals and grow small businesses while helping companies enhance sales and reach new markets. This Challenge aims to understand the key challenges and opportunities to scale and maximise the integration, growth, and positive impact of these models/businesses.

THE OUTPUT

The Challenge will produce a report with a taxonomy of inclusive distribution models and enablers of scale along with practical recommendations and potential partnership opportunities. This will draw on lessons and insights from companies pioneering inclusive distribution at scale across a range of industries as well as the Inter-American Development Bank’s SCALA programme which seeks to create economic opportunities for people at the Base of the Pyramid (BoP) through the distribution of goods and services.

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Business Call to Action,
Fundes,
Inclusive Business Action Network,
Tufts University Fletcher School
WBCSD

Photo: © Arne Hoel/The World Bank
HOW CAN WE EMBED THE SDGS INTO BUSINESS?

THE CHALLENGE
Action to support the SDGs must be in businesses’ best financial interests to succeed at scale. Generically, the business case for the SDGs has been made. Companies acknowledge, that business cannot succeed in societies that fail and managing these issues proactively can help both to protect and to create business value.

This Challenge builds on two recent Reports by Business Fights Poverty and the Harvard Kennedy School’s Corporate Responsibility Initiative: “Business and the SDGs – Building Blocks for Success at Scale” and “Business and the UN: Working Together Towards the Sustainable Development Goals.”

THE OUTPUT
The Challenge will develop a toolkit to enable business managers to better understand the drivers and barriers for commercial and operational functions to engage with the SDGs, and learn from the experience of participating companies as they look to embed the SDGs more deeply into the core business and supply chain.

SUPPORTED BY
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Ashridge Centre for Business and Sustainability at Hult International Business School
HOW CAN BUSINESS HARNESS THE SDGS FOR GREATER IMPACT IN SMALLHOLDER SUPPLY CHAINS?

THE CHALLENGE
Through agricultural value chains and smallholder sourcing programmes, the private sector has an opportunity to contribute to a number of SDGs and targets, including those aimed at reducing poverty, doubling agricultural productivity, creating decent work, and promoting women’s empowerment.

As a starting point, many companies operating in this area have undertaken extensive mapping exercises to clarify how their existing strategies and programmes align with relevant SDGs—primarily to inform internal engagement and dialogue with external stakeholders.

Whilst this foundational work is important, a growing number of companies are now asking themselves and their partners how they can harness the SDGs to spur even greater impact for the business and for smallholders.

THE OUTPUT
The Challenge will develop guidance for businesses with smallholder sourcing strategies on how to harness the SDGs for greater impact, informed by research and consultation with civil society, government and academia.
How can business support youth employability?

The Challenge
This Challenge will consider what business can do, working with its partners at the country level, to boost youth employability and employment, and how to accelerate the level of business engagement with the ultimate objective of leveraging private sector resources to help reduce youth unemployment.

According to a 2015 OECD Report on youth employability “Young people are best integrated into the world of work when education systems are flexible and responsive to the needs of the labour market, when employers are engaged in both designing and providing education programmes, when young people have access to high-quality career guidance and further education that can help them to match their skills to prospective jobs”.

The Output
The Challenge will develop a Guide for business and those working with business who want to make a measurable difference to youth unemployment through investing in and supporting the development of skills that will help young people find decent jobs, in a range of different country contexts.

The Guide will not focus only on the supply-side - the provision of training and skills development opportunities - but also on the demand-side, identifying what is needed to ensure that more young people successfully make the transition into work.
WHAT ROLE SHOULD BUSINESS PLAY IN THE PURSUIT OF PEACE?

THE CHALLENGE
Despite the fact that broad macroeconomic connections between business and peace have long been acknowledged more needs to be done.

This Challenge aims to deepen understanding around the role that business can play in peacekeeping, peace making, and peace building. More specifically, this Challenge will raise awareness of current research highlight areas for further research; and draw practical lessons for business and other audiences.

THE OUTPUT
The Challenge output will be a set of Online Resources to deepen learning around the role of business in supporting peace, including practical insights for and from business. It will accompany a Special Issue on Business and Peace for Business Horizons being curated by the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, and will bring together written, audio and video content.

The Challenge will explore why businesses might contribute to peace, practical examples of and lessons from businesses’ contributions, and how one might empirically assess the impact of business actions.

SUPPORTED BY
HOW DO YOU BUILD A PARTNERSHIP THAT DELIVERS SHARED VALUE AND LASTING IMPACT?

THE CHALLENGE

In May 2013, GSK and Save the Children announced an ambitious partnership to help save the lives of 1 million children in some of the world’s poorest countries. At the heart of the partnership, from the beginning, has been a recognition that moving beyond the traditional corporate-charity model to a new collaborative approach that fully combines each organisation’s skills, expertise and resources could lead to greater lasting impact.

Over the past three years, GSK and Save the Children’s partnership has grown in scope and scale and continues to evolve and innovate. Integrated teams now work at the global and local level on a range of activities including training and supporting health workers, widening vaccination coverage, developing child friendly medicines, researching innovative solutions for life threatening yet preventable conditions, and working to call for stronger child health policies.

THE OUTPUT

As the partnership reaches its third anniversary, this Challenge reflects on how two large and diverse organisations have translated a shared global commitment into sustained and effective action for children.

At a time when the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals have re-focused attention on the critical role that partnerships will play in delivering ambitious new global development priorities, this Challenge aims to shed new light on partnership practice.
HOW CAN BUSINESS HELP STRENGTHEN PROVISION OF HIGH QUALITY, LOW COST EDUCATION SERVICES FOR THE POOR?

THE CHALLENGE
Providers of low cost education serve millions of families in developing countries. Some already offer a good education while charging little more than the (often hidden) costs of a state education. However, there are also many poor quality providers, genuine concerns about equity, and constraints on scaling up low cost, high quality education models.

The Challenge will explore how BRAC (a Challenge partner) and other effective providers have played a role in overcoming equity and quality issues in low cost private education. It will draw on investors’ influence and other opportunities to help apply those lessons on equity and quality, working with providers, regulators and those who shape the debate on private provision of education for the poorest.

THE OUTPUT
A toolkit will be produced to help investors frame interventions that will overcome equity challenges in low cost private education and support parents’ ability to make informed choices, based on quality of provision, for their children’s schooling. A paper will also outline principles for the kind of regulation that effectively supports quality, equity, investment and scalability in low cost private education provision, as a basis for investors’ and providers’ engagement with regulators and those who influence them.
WHAT ROLES SHOULD BUSINESS AND OTHERS PLAY IN ENABLING FARMERS TO IMPROVE THEIR INCOMES?

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Sustainable Food Lab

THE CHALLENGE

Many food and beverage manufacturers support farmers in their supply chains in order to strengthen the quality, reliability and sustainability of critical supplies, for example through helping farmers improve their yields and reduce their costs.

Increasingly, companies are seeing the value of a focus on improving farmers’ incomes, going beyond reporting on the number of farmers reached or the volume of commodity purchased. Rising incomes clearly have great inherent value for farmers and wider society. Business also benefits because prospering farmers can invest more, strengthening the quality and consistency of supply, as well as reduce pressures on young people to leave farming for jobs in cities. Stakeholder expectations of business are also growing.

THE OUTPUT

A White Paper will be produced outlining the benefits to business, society and smallholders of growth in incomes. The Paper will identify the critical levers that influence smallholder farmers’ incomes, and provide guidance on the roles companies and others can play in using those levers to help increase incomes. The Challenge will also stimulate a deeper dialogue within companies and with other stakeholders on different actors’ roles in helping to improve farmers’ incomes.
THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

GET INVOLVED
If you are interested in becoming a supporter please contact us at:
team@businessfightspoitry.org

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