Business Fights Poverty, in partnership with Change By Degrees, recently held a series of Online Forum Discussions that will contribute to the next version of our Climate Justice Framework, which we will publish at COP27 to inform business action to put people at the centre of climate action.

CLIMATE JUSTICE
ONLINE FORUM DISCUSSIONS
07 APRIL 2022 / 21 APRIL 2022 / 5 MAY 2022 / 12 MAY 2022

The Online Forum Discussions covered the following questions:

- How can we put people at the centre of climate action?
- How can we ensure a just transition from carbon to resilience by investing in education and skills?
- How can we put diversity and inclusion at the heart of climate action to spread the benefits and burdens fairly?
- How can a company’s climate change commitments be better informed by those most impacted?

We are grateful to our community of people and organisations who generously gave their time and insights to help answer these questions. This Insights report brings together 3 key insights from each of the Forum discussions.

In the first 8 weeks of these discussions, we had:

- 403 COMMENTS
- 5.1K UNIQUE VIEWS
- 46 CONTRIBUTORS
- 697 LIKES

The next opportunity to join the conversation is on the Resilience day of the Business Fights Poverty Global Summit on June 15, 2022. Use code BFPG22 to register for free here: https://businessfightspoverty.org/bfp-global-summit-2022-register/
IN this online forum, our panellists discussed how to prevent the move to net-zero from having adverse impacts on people’s human rights and how businesses can strike this balance with care. Our discussants looked at the best practices for companies committing to support climate justice, the sectors exemplifying good practice, and how technology and social media can support the involvement of those most impacted by the climate crisis.

INSIGHT 1: BEST PRACTICE FOR BUSINESS: EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY AND ELEVATING THE VOICES OF THOSE MOST AFFECTED

Our panellists agreed that companies must embed their sustainability strategy into the fabric of how their business operates. Daniella Foster said that strategy needs to be integrated across the value chain so that these programs are “a force for good and a force for growth, not just a CSR initiative.” She also stressed how the most successful strategies focus on resilience instead of short-term relief from a climate event.

The panel discussed how best practice involves elevating the voices of the most vulnerable and giving them a platform, bringing people into the conversation. “Affected communities must be able to engage with companies to collaboratively transform the business model,” said Phil Bloomer. Nina Vollmer highlighted that children are often not considered in companies’ climate strategies despite being one of the most impacted groups and having valuable insight.

INSIGHT 2: BUSINESSES ARE ENGAGING EMPLOYEES AND LEVERAGING THEIR VALUE CHAINS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

Our panellists highlighted some of the companies who are proving their commitment to climate justice.

Emma Williams said that due to the nature of their business, oil, gas, and power companies are moved to push fast, and she used the electricity company Enel as an example of good practice. “As part of their push, they will need to close thermal power stations.”
They worked with unions and made a commitment to respect human rights and fair labour practices and set up apprenticeships to transfer knowledge," she says. Hamish Taylor, a member of our community, gave the example of INEOS Grangemouth, which engaged teams of young apprentices in a #FuelChange initiative. This kickstarted conversations and empowered young people to channel ideas that could reduce emissions.

David Taylor gave the example of best practice shown by Ben & Jerry's, which recognised that the supply chains involved in production are characterised by high levels of poverty. Ben & Jerry's signed the Fairtrade Business Pledge, committing to pay fair prices, develop long-term partnerships with farmers, and attend to their climate impact. He gave the example of one farmer cooperative which was able to install solar panels and a water pump, as well as build a medical clinic employing a nurse as a result of receiving fairtrade premiums.

Amanda Kron noted that businesses must be accountable for their climate-related human rights impacts. She cited examples of court cases brought against companies and advised companies to set up effective grievance and remediation mechanisms.

**INSIGHT 3: TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA CAN PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN ENSURING THAT IMPACTED COMMUNITIES HAVE A GREATER SAY IN DECISIONS BEING MADE**

Social media and technology can mobilise people around the globe, encouraging them to share, protest, and take action to find solutions for the climate crisis.

Technology means there is no excuse to not properly consult with impacted communities when governments or companies are making decisions about climate change policies. But as Laura Kelly pointed out, “care [is] needed as women are still digitally excluded—165 million fewer women than men own a mobile phone, and over 300 million fewer women than men access the internet on a mobile.”

According to Amanda Kron, technological solutions could include increasing communities’ capacity to cope with climate change; improving the efficiency, accountability and transparency of supply chains; widening access to technologies; and supporting inclusive decision-making and the consent-based use of traditional knowledge in building resilience. An example given was the announcement at COP26 for a £500m deforestation fund and how policy can involve farmers as policymakers, using their knowledge and expertise to shape programs designed to deliver those funds. “Let’s put them in the driving seat,” said David Taylor.

“The most successful strategies focus on resilience instead of short-term relief from a climate event.”
Daniella Foster, Bayer

“Centring women and girls in climate solutions, you get a two-for-one benefit: more inclusive societies that are more resilient to climate.”
Barbara Merz, Pathfinder International
THREE INSIGHTS

HOW CAN WE ENSURE A JUST TRANSITION FROM CARBON TO RESILIENCE BY INVESTING IN EDUCATION AND SKILLS?

CLIMATE JUSTICE / ONLINE FORUM DISCUSSION / 21 APRIL 2022

We would like to thank the following panellists and members of the Business Fights Poverty community for their participation:

Samantha Smith, ITUC, Just Transition Centre, Sandra Latner, Senior Director, Sustainability & ESG Investor Engagement, Pearson; Justin Perrettson, Head of Sustainability Partnerships, Novozymes; Brendan Curran, Policy Fellow, Grantham Institute, LSE; Simon Connel, Global Head Sustainability Strategy, Standard Chartered; Daniella Foster, Global VP & Head, Public Affairs, Science & Sustainability, Consumer Health, Bayer; Simon Derrick, Global Head of Sustainability, Blue Skies; Alexandra Knezovich, Managing Director, Market Development & Communications, Toilet Board Coalition; Jacqueline Garcia, Project Manager, Energy Saving Trust

Moderator: Alice Allan, Collaboration Director, Business Fights Poverty

In this online forum, our panellists first defined what a just transition in business means, before considering what a move towards a just transition might look like, using examples of organisations taking action. Using this definition, the panellists reflected on the success of different approaches, in particular how companies can promote a just transition by investing in skills, tools, knowledge, and education.

The panel then moved their attention to the challenges that businesses face and how education can help overcome these obstacles. Finally, the panel discussed the role of technology, including social technology, and how it can help employees, workers, and impacted communities contribute and innovate towards a just transition.

INSIGHT 1: FOR THE TRANSITION TO BE JUST, IT IS VITAL THAT ALL PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM THE TRANSITION, NOT JUST THOSE WITH THE CAPITAL OR CAPABILITY TO BE FIRST MOVERS

Our panelists first set out to define what a just transition means to them and their organisation. “A just transition is both the outcome—a fairer, greener future for all—and the process that must be undertaken in partnership with those impacted by the transition to net zero,” said Jacqueline Garcia. “For the transition to be just, it is vital that all people benefit from the transition, not just those with the capital or capability to be first movers. A just transition must also address the needs of marginalised groups such as women and girls, people with disabilities, and displaced people,” she added.

Brendan Curran identified a just transition by looking at the impact on four main groups: workers, suppliers, communities, and consumers. Meanwhile, Daniella Foster identified four key areas to focus on when achieving a just transition: firstly, inclusive growth and sectors investing in communities; secondly, behaviour change—changing habits and practices; thirdly, collective action—everyone playing their role; and finally, the supply chain—a code of conduct for how companies treat their suppliers.

Alexandra Knezovich, from the Toilet Board Coalition, emphasised that they now...
A just transition is both the outcome—a fairer, greener future for all—and the process that must be undertaken in partnership with those impacted by the transition to net zero.

Jacqueline Garcia Project Manager,
Energy Saving Trust

...grow the experts they need...from within the organisation by committing to learn and create opportunities and environments for others around them to learn together. Brendan Curran mentioned several examples of energy utility companies taking action on a just transition, including ZE PAK, who is based in one of Poland’s key coal regions. This company is using the EU’s just transition programmes to engage investors in the conversation and also as a catalyst for action to leave no workers behind. The panellists also touched on which industries, aside from energy, must pull together to fly the flag for a just transition—from big tech companies to fashion, to food and hospitality. Justin Perretsson highlighted that the dialogue around Just Transition will continue to evolve, and it’s important to “consider a range of aspects—for example, ecosystems and value chain approaches to social impacts—as much as climate/emission reductions”. Sam Smith concluded succinctly: “To do something meaningful about climate change and decent work involves all sectors and all jobs.”

INSIGHT 2: TO HELP SMES IN SUPPLY CHAINS REACH NET ZERO, WE NEED COLLABORATION ON EXPANDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Multinational buyers can play an important role in helping SMEs build their capacity and transition to net zero. There are many challenges in achieving a just transition, and the panellists spoke at length about how they can combat them through education.

“Education plays a critical role—and there is a second dimension to that education, which is creating skills to enable individuals to succeed and have meaningful employment in a low-carbon world,” said Simon Connell. Sandra Latner highlighted that Pearson aims to meet the changing needs of learners and help to address wider societal and environmental...
challenges in the process. “We have a particular focus on increasing access to learning—offering more people more learning opportunities through more products.”

Sam Smith says a key challenge is maintaining and creating decent jobs while also making sure people are supported in transition through nationalised services. For Daniella Foster, it’s all about collaboration and overcoming obstacles. “Going it alone isn’t always the best path. For instance, the Global Self-Care Federation recently launched the Charter for Environmentally Sustainable Self-Care, the first industry-wide climate action resolution by the consumer health sector.”

Daniella Foster opened by citing technology’s role in implementing a just transition as an enabler—helping farmers feed a growing population through digital solutions, for example. She also sees technology as a platform helping to give people a voice to discuss ideas or crowdsourced, but the challenge remains to secure equal access. Finally, it can be a convenient way to communicate. Many of the panellists highlighted the need for simplicity and allowing end user participation when designing solutions. Daniella Foster shared an example of QR codes serving as a means to deliver education. Additionally, Simon Derrick referenced how technology has a vital role to play in data collection, transparency, and impact reporting that will ultimately help businesses make better decisions.

Other examples included tech-facilitated funding platforms to make sure impacted communities are reached, as well as tech-enabled carbon footprint quantification tools. Jacqueline Garcia used the example of solar-powered appliances working to level the playing field for women and girls. “Due to their user-friendly design, solar mills can free women from the drudgery associated with manually processing grain, giving them time to engage in income-generating activities.” However, she also noted that large upfront costs can be a key obstacle for implementing a just transition, even in developed countries like the UK, requiring solutions like grants and low-cost loans.

Simon Derrick summarised: “We have talked a bit about transparency, research, access to data, funding, innovation, tech, and stakeholder engagement—so for me, the key takeaway is the importance of ‘connecting the dots’ … how we need to collaborate as much as possible with all the stakeholders across the whole value chain.”

Several of the panellists noted that SMEs often lack the time and resources to work effectively towards net zero. Simon Connell observed that there has been “substantial growth in supply chain finance programmes with a climate focus”, citing Walmart’s Gigaton Programme as an example.

**It means taking time to properly understand and improve our impact without having unintended consequences that might compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs.**

Simon Derrick, Global Head of Sustainability, Blue Skies

**INSIGHT 3: TECHNOLOGY CAN GIVE VOICE AND PROVIDE SIMPLE SOLUTIONS—BUT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, WE NEED TO SCALE ACCESS TO THESE SOLUTIONS**

It means taking time to properly understand and improve our impact without having unintended consequences that might compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Simon Derrick, Global Head of Sustainability, Blue Skies

Several of the panellists noted that SMEs often lack the time and resources to work effectively towards net zero. Simon Connell observed that there has been “substantial growth in supply chain finance programmes with a climate focus”, citing Walmart’s Gigaton Programme as an example.

**INSIGHT 3: TECHNOLOGY CAN GIVE VOICE AND PROVIDE SIMPLE SOLUTIONS—BUT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, WE NEED TO SCALE ACCESS TO THESE SOLUTIONS**

Daniella Foster opened by citing technology’s role in implementing a just transition as an enabler—helping farmers feed a growing population through digital solutions, for example. She also sees technology as a platform helping to give people a voice to discuss ideas or crowdsourced, but the challenge remains to secure equal access. Finally, it can be a convenient way to communicate. Many of the panellists highlighted the need for simplicity and allowing end user participation when designing solutions. Daniella Foster shared an example of QR codes serving as a means to deliver education. Additionally, Simon Derrick referenced how technology has a vital role to play in data collection, transparency, and impact reporting that will ultimately help businesses make better decisions.

Other examples included tech-facilitated funding platforms to make sure impacted communities are reached, as well as tech-enabled carbon footprint quantification tools. Jacqueline Garcia used the example of solar-powered appliances working to level the playing field for women and girls. “Due to their user-friendly design, solar mills can free women from the drudgery associated with manually processing grain, giving them time to engage in income-generating activities.” However, she also noted that large upfront costs can be a key obstacle for implementing a just transition, even in developed countries like the UK, requiring solutions like grants and low-cost loans.

Simon Derrick summarised: “We have talked a bit about transparency, research, access to data, funding, innovation, tech, and stakeholder engagement—so for me, the key takeaway is the importance of ‘connecting the dots’ … how we need to collaborate as much as possible with all the stakeholders across the whole value chain.”

**INSIGHT 3: TECHNOLOGY CAN GIVE VOICE AND PROVIDE SIMPLE SOLUTIONS—BUT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, WE NEED TO SCALE ACCESS TO THESE SOLUTIONS**

Daniella Foster opened by citing technology’s role in implementing a just transition as an enabler—helping farmers feed a growing population through digital solutions, for example. She also sees technology as a platform helping to give people a voice to discuss ideas or crowdsourced, but the challenge remains to secure equal access. Finally, it can be a convenient way to communicate. Many of the panellists highlighted the need for simplicity and allowing end user participation when designing solutions. Daniella Foster shared an example of QR codes serving as a means to deliver education. Additionally, Simon Derrick referenced how technology has a vital role to play in data collection, transparency, and impact reporting that will ultimately help businesses make better decisions.

Other examples included tech-facilitated funding platforms to make sure impacted communities are reached, as well as tech-enabled carbon footprint quantification tools. Jacqueline Garcia used the example of solar-powered appliances working to level the playing field for women and girls. “Due to their user-friendly design, solar mills can free women from the drudgery associated with manually processing grain, giving them time to engage in income-generating activities.” However, she also noted that large upfront costs can be a key obstacle for implementing a just transition, even in developed countries like the UK, requiring solutions like grants and low-cost loans.

Simon Derrick summarised: “We have talked a bit about transparency, research, access to data, funding, innovation, tech, and stakeholder engagement—so for me, the key takeaway is the importance of ‘connecting the dots’ … how we need to collaborate as much as possible with all the stakeholders across the whole value chain.”

**INSIGHT 3: TECHNOLOGY CAN GIVE VOICE AND PROVIDE SIMPLE SOLUTIONS—BUT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, WE NEED TO SCALE ACCESS TO THESE SOLUTIONS**
The discussion included how to include diverse voices in decision-making and how commitments to diversity and inclusion relate to commitments to climate. The panel called for greater focus on protecting the most vulnerable people and communities from climate impacts and unintended consequences of climate policies.

**INSIGHT 1: THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS BUILDING RESILIENCE IS TO IDENTIFY WHICH GROUPS ARE EXPERIENCING CLIMATE INJUSTICE**

Dylan Siegler of Greenbiz kickstarted this topic by providing the example of Verizon, one of the first large companies to use the term ‘climate justice’ in the U.S. context to describe the idea that climate impacts are felt differently across communities with varying access to resources, and that we must work to ensure that no one shoulders an unequal burden. In her words, “clearly (in the U.S., as elsewhere) resource inequality is very much linked to race and ethnicity, so much of the work to create better equity in climate change or any other topic is also work to overcome the impacts of systemic racism.”

Moderator Alice Allan pointed out that COP26 also brought the relationship between climate and gender to the fore. She gives the examples of L’Oreal, Primark, and Apple, businesses running projects that seek to empower women and build climate resilience in their value chains. Lizzy Whitehead highlighted how Mercy Corps is highlighting the “unique climate challenges posed to women and girls, especially in conflict-affected areas.” Strikingly, she noted that “by 2030, 26% of the world’s population will live in fragile states,” and called for greater private sector engagement in the most vulnerable countries, where climate finance for adaptation is lacking. Dylan suggested
We need to set out clear arguments—how climate justice will enable businesses to survive and thrive. We need to demystify it all and share practical examples of how business can do better.

Lizzy Whitehead, Head of Advocacy, Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, MercyCorps

that companies with supply chains reliant on vulnerable areas offer a good place to start.

Identifying vulnerable groups in value chains presents a challenge to business. Lizzy Whitehead suggested that categories of communities be broken down further and that there is a danger in generalisation: “People end up generalising ‘women and girls’, which brushes over a whole spectrum of vulnerabilities.” Ruchira Joshi remarked on the diversity of vulnerabilities to climate change across the value chain, which “can make it difficult for companies to identify the specific stakeholder groups to take into account when considering how to share the burdens and benefits of climate change.” Ruchira suggested three ways to identify vulnerable groups: first, use expert partners to identify and include the right stakeholders in decision-making; second, work with peers to make quick progress and make pre-competitive collaboration the norm; and third, use rapid pilots to gather data and be willing change approach as needed. Once the vulnerable groups are identified, businesses should start by really listening to them.

INSIGHT 2: BUSINESS HAS MUCH TO GAIN FROM REALLY LISTENING TO THOSE MOST IMPACTED BY THE CLIMATE CRISIS

A good place for companies to begin the listening process is to engage with their own employees and people in their value chains. Joanna Romero urged business to “start by understanding how a company’s employees are impacted by climate change and how they can help them overcome some of those challenges.” This provides vital information not only on which interventions would be most valuable, but which is likely to also shed light on sustainability issues that are material to different business sectors.

Kitrhora Cerri offered one example of how vulnerabilities to climate change will have a significant impact on business. “I recently learned from colleagues at the ILO that 1.2 billion jobs depend on healthy ecosystems and a stable environment for their livelihoods.
Increased heat stress alone will cause 2.2% of working hours to be lost—that sounds small, but it equates to 80 million full-time jobs globally. Understanding the breadth of the impact and the relevance of this to their workforces and supply chains will be a key first step for many companies.

Ruchira Joshi made the convincing argument that communities who are disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change are those that produce the agri-commodities on which a business’s products, suppliers, and consumers are dependent. “If you don’t bring your influence to bear on this topic now, your business will not exist in the long run.”

Dylan Seigler advised, “the simple answer to understanding where the opportunities are for business to ensure that climate change is more equitably experienced is: look to your core business, where your company spends its money, and you’ll often find the opportunities.”

**INSIGHT 3: SHARE BURDENS AND BENEFITS BY CO-DESIGNING SOLUTIONS THAT MEET THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF STAKEHOLDERS**

Lydia Barker said, “the real solutions to climate change will come from those most impacted by the climate crisis: communities resisting untenable fossil fuel development; traditional farmers who practice soil conservation; Indigenous Peoples who defend their forests; women; young people; and resilient communities with diverse economies and networks. ... Grassroots solutions have significant potential to reduce carbon emissions, foster economic empowerment, advance public health, and protect and restore global biodiversity.” Consequently, businesses must focus on empowering people through grassroots strategies.

Lydia also suggested that companies can learn from decentralised and participatory decision-making models being used in different sectors, such as those used by Greengrants. Leonora Dowley agreed, emphasising that “at #LearningPlanet, we believe it’s very important to bring the voice of young people into all discussions”. Lizzy Whitehead shared that Zurich Investment Group has signed on to the Principles for Locally Lead Adaptation, helping them in “shifting to a new model where local actors have greater power and resources to build resilience to climate change.”

Panellists noted the important role that technology, including social technology, can play in ensuring that those least represented due to gender, race, age, or disability have an active role in their organisation’s climate change ambitions—for example, providing access to information and new opportunities for inclusion in decision-making, facilitating local data collection, or providing access to learning for reskilling and upskilling.

“Technology ... has allowed us to have much more frank conversations about how we show up, who makes decisions, how we work with local partners,” said Lizzy Whitehead. This was also the case at Verizon, where Dylan Seigler “looked deeply into the role of technology in not only helping advance climate resilience for those vulnerable to physical or transition risks of climate change, but how technology can work in favour of underrepresented communities.”

Technology is also useful for data collection to ensure informed decisions on interventions and investments. For example, IDH applies this approach to smallholder farming. Startups such as ISeeChange are mobilising people in climate change-impacted communities as “sensors”—reporting the changes they see in their environments.

Above all, companies can maximise their impact by co-designing solutions as a core part of their business strategy rather than viewing climate justice as a purely philanthropic activity. As Joanna Romero said, “my call to action would be for companies to embed sustainability into their business operations and move away from seeing it as a CSR initiative.”
INSIGHT 1:

START BY CLARIFYING THE ‘WHY’—
WHY IS IT SO CRUCIAL TO CENTRE THE VOICES OF THE MOST IMPACTED PEOPLE?

The climate crisis is impacting groups differently. It is therefore essential that companies committed to climate action use their power and platform to give voice to the communities who are impacted most by the climate crisis and seek to address the power imbalances. ‘The idea that we are “all in this together” is a myth - some are more “in this” than others,’ said Caroline.

A new trade model is required to recognise these power imbalances by ‘being very transparent, really listening and not extracting views,’ Alice said. It’s also about rethinking who these groups are. ‘Many market programmes focus on private companies and see farmers as recipients, not actors capable of driving change,’ said Damilola.

Rethinking the trade model will benefit businesses too. Businesses are responsible for a large proportion of emissions and equally have enormous potential to be leaders in tackling the climate crisis. ‘Prioritising decarbonisation is a win-win for companies to build their reputation and reduce their own economic loss’ Shreya said. ‘Supporting communities most impacted by climate change and prioritising decarbonisation is a win-win for companies.’

What’s more, farmers can in turn aid with knowledge. ‘Farmers are the holders of...’
the regenerative agricultural knowledge and skills that the private sector needs to meet their new lofty targets. Their active involvement in the process of market systems development will bring benefits for all,' Damilola said. ‘Listen to the people and put them in the heart of all planning and decision-making,’ Shreya summarised.

**INSIGHT 2: WE NEED TO BUILD TRUST BY DEMONSTRATING GENUINE LISTENING THAT RESULTS IN ACTION**

Building trust with these impacted communities and focusing on changing image is of critical importance. Businesses are often seen as untrustworthy and illegitimate. ‘A challenge for global businesses is that they are far away from the most impacted communities and therefore may not be seen as legitimate partners in climate solutions. I think that developing carefully considered partnerships with trust and transparency is critical’ said Liz. ‘Businesses should provide a safe space for community members to raise their concerns and contribute to developing solutions in an equitable manner,’ she added.

Businesses should engage with communities which are being directly or indirectly impacted by their core business or supply chains—not providing grants to unrelated groups. ‘It’s about knowing who to work with,’ Alice said. ‘This is often where NGOs are helpful as brokers or facilitators.’ This involves overcoming barriers with local communities to increase participation, but businesses will find difficulties in this. Shreya noted that low levels of participation may come from lack of transport or obstacles that prevent involvement (e.g. lack of childcare). Communities might not participate as they may have felt ignored in the past and therefore are less likely to get involved again. The complexity of processes can intimidate people and prevent them from getting involved. People may be scared to speak up because they might not understand what is going on. Finally, people are busy and may not have time to listen to businesses.

This can all be overcome, however. ‘Access to information, project plans, and engagement of local people in the businesses can improve transparency, accountability, as well as participation.’ Liz provided the example of the relationship between farmers and mills with indigenous communities in sugarcane countries. ‘Regular engagement through structured dialogue is helpful, ensuring that there is free, prior informed consent (FPIC) for natural resources.’ Another problem is that engagement doesn’t come until it’s too late. ‘From a local Caribbean context, such instances are quite rare, as the consultations with communities—particularly indigenous groups—is usually triggered after the firm has commenced operations, which often leaves such communities in a more vulnerable state,’ Jevanic said.

Measuring processes must be in place across businesses. They must ensure that dialogue is having an impact on business behaviour, identify the impact on the differing communities, use data sharing tools and share data collection. Japheth gave an example of how they are measuring their

People who have directly experienced a problem have a much different outlook on their needs and priorities. That’s why it is crucial to engage and listen to the most impacted communities.

Shreya KC, Advisor for Nepalese Youth for Climate Action and UNICEF Youth Climate Change Champion for South Asia
impact. ‘At Hand in Hand Eastern Africa, while seeking to do a second intervention for an Eco-Farming project at Njabini in Nyandarua County in Kenya, we sought the views of the community by conducting a value chains analysis to understand what value chains serves the community best.’

**INSIGHT 3: COMPANIES CAN LEVERAGE THEIR OWN RESOURCES TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES**

Businesses are in a great position to empower communities, with a wealth of resources at their disposal. The focus must be on teaching others how to use technology, spreading public awareness on climate change, tackling misinformation, and providing access to information. ‘With proper penetration of technology, target communities can access market information and thus fetch better prices for their produce,’ said Japheth. Education is another way companies can empower. ‘Education is the best place to start, especially because many people still do not understand how best to use technology for good and tend to misuse the platforms or opportunities it brings,’ said Gladys. Lalit brought up the example of the Deloitte Global’s 2021 Climate Check report: Executives cited education and the promotion of science-backed climate research as the environmental actions that are critical to spurring action. The report pointed to collaboration as an important way to advance progress and inform public policy solutions.

The private sector plays a leading role in cross-sector collaboration in two significant ways. First, companies can provide the technologies to make solutions more accessible and affordable to all. Second, through their communications expertise—specifically in running campaigns and outreach projects—businesses can lead in boosting public awareness and engagement. When companies lead and when their entire workforces are engaged, the public’s mindset, behaviour, and lifestyles can also change.’ According to Lalit, ‘technology, specifically social technology, uses all available knowledge and the digital tools at hand to transform society. We often downplay its enormous potential for transforming the world into a fairer, more equal, sustainable, and prosperous place for everyone. It provides a cross-sector approach to identifying and tackling the foremost challenges facing humanity: inequality, poverty, and education.

Gladys remarked on the use of social media and gave an example of the platform’s growth in the Solomon Islands. ‘Young people under the age of 35 make up around 70% of the country’s population, and therefore having more of them utilising social technology provides an avenue of good reach. By reach, it is not just to get many young people, but importantly a large number of people who are better educated and able to engage as well as influence various levels of decision-making in their communities.’ In this way, action should involve using social media to inform, engage, and influence decision-making, local institutions should be strengthened, and businesses should lobby for favourable policies and support activists (e.g. Patagonia, a self-proclaimed activist company).

In the context of violence and conflict, it is important for businesses to build resilience with impacted communities not just as a humanitarian imperative but because it is bad for business. ‘The private sector can harness its vast potential to mitigate fragility’ Lalit stated. Building on this, Manav reflected on the importance of engaging in policy advocacy given the fact that institutions are normally weaker in lower-income countries and thus have weaker regulations in comparison to countries in the Global North. ‘Transparency and accountability can only be improved by regulations’. On the other hand, Japheth believed that this can be achieved not only through favourable policies (e.g. taxation), but also by strengthening co-ownership models, such as farmer and community-owned institutions (e.g. cooperatives).
RESOURCES

07 APRIL 2022
- The Green Economy Coalition
- World Benchmarking Alliance Report: 2021 Just Transition Assessment
- OHCHR Report: Human Rights, Climate Change and Business

21 APRIL 2022
- International Labour Organization: Guidelines for a just transition
- Charter for Environmentally Sustainable Self-Care
- Grantham Research Institute: Climate Change and the Environment
- Clifford Chance - Just Transactions: A white paper on just transition and the banking centre

05 MAY 2022
- Learning Planet
- The Consumer Goods Forum
- SourceUp
- Why climate action needs a gender focus
- Women and the Net Zero Economy
- Charter for Environmentally Sustainable Self-Care
- The Sustainable Trade Initiative
- How to best use farm-level data for impactful smallholder models
- Global Adaptation and Resilience Investment (GARI) working group

12 MAY 2022
- Practical Action: Market interest groups
- Practical Action: Participatory Market Systems Development
- Bonsucro: Sourcing rum responsibly: Nordic Alcohol Monopolies sign joint statement
- Bonsucro: Projeto de reflorestamento da Usina São Luiz - Strategy Map - Climate Justice | Greenpeace
- ISeeChange
- Patagonia: Action Works Platform (a self-proclaimed ‘activist company’)
- Deloitte Global: 2021 Climate Check report
- Natura: The 2020 Commitment to Life
- Natura: Natura joins Dow’s Project Ybá to support the Amazon rainforest
- Asheville: The Climate Justice Initiative
- Asheville: Climate Resilience Assessment