BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY
Oxford 2019

JULY 11TH 2019
EMBEDDING PURPOSE AUTHENTICALLY INTO BUSINESS

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2019 PARTNERS
## CONTENTS

05  Editors Note  
06  The ‘Purpose Paradigm’: Solution or Scam?  
09  On Purpose  
12  Embedding Purpose into Business - Oxford 2019  
14  Spotlight series - Interviews  
16  How is business rethinking Generation Purpose?  
19  The Role of Business in Education for Sustainable Development  
21  Joint Civil Society and Business Advocacy  
23  Building Transformational Partnerships  
24  The Intrapreneurship Ecosystem  
26  17 Business Models to Build Refugee Resilience  
28  Doing business with integrity is good for business and society  
30  Find out how to Get Involved  
31  2019 Events

## Contributors

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THE WAYS IN WHICH BUSINESS CAN AND SHOULD BE ADDRESSING SOCIAL ISSUES ARE MANY AND COMPLEX. THIS MAGAZINE HELPS YOU TO NAVIGATE THE CHALLENGES AND FIND OUT ABOUT SOME OF THE LEADING EDGE THINKING AND TOPICS ACROSS THE SPACE.

Brought to you by a team that share a common belief in business as a force for good, our focus this issue is business purpose. Of late, business purpose has come under attack. Are companies embedding purpose authentically into business, or is this simply a veneer?

Since joining Business Fights Poverty in June 2018, the more time I spend with people working in the social impact space the more inspired I am. The visionary energy and openness to collaboration so many are bringing to this work is deepening my belief in the transformative capacity of business. Whether it’s the direct action of people on the frontline building resilience through refugee-inclusive business models (pg. 26-27), innovators creating the conditions for social entrepreneurs to thrive (pg. 24-25), or leaders whose partnership work will drive system change across entire sectors (pg. 23) - it is clear that there are plenty out there who are proving that business purpose can be done well. I have also learned the value of getting the right people into close quarters: our July conference in Oxford is a prime example (pg. 12-13). When a group with the same values, interests and ambitions convene, deep and honest exploration of social issues can take place and, from that point, the foundations for real change can be built. As importantly, and...
highlighted by our Co-Founder and CEO, Zahid Torres-Rahman in his recent article, ‘The Purpose Paradigm: Solution or scam?’ embedding purpose is a journey (pg. 6-8). Clearly there is still a lot to learn - but the appetite for purpose is there, and the key is to do it with humility, and a willingness to learn and adapt.

Bringing these insights into 2019, we have a role to play in moving the business purpose conversation forwards. In practice, this means creating enabling conditions for change-agents within the business community, to give them a voice and stimulate action. I personally hope that the Business Fights Poverty Magazine, alongside our regular online editorial offerings, is a contribution to this process.

Beyond the magazine, there is much to look forward this year on the Business Fights Poverty agenda and plenty of opportunities for you to get involved (pg.30). This February, we will deep-dive into what makes a great transformational partnership in an online discussion (pg. 31). Following on from our work with CARE and Cargill (pg. 23), the discussion is set to hone in on what purposeful collaboration looks like on the ground; what works and how-to avoid the pitfalls. March sees in the beginning of a new collaboration with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), CARE International and members of our Business Leaders Group to deepen the understanding of what business can do to eliminate gender-based violence in the workplace. With so much to be gained from creating a safe working environment, this project comes at a pivotal time in the global movement towards greater gender equality. We have also recently launched a new collaboration with a number of companies and foundations on ways in which businesses can be more effective in supporting small and medium enterprises within their value chains and beyond. And we’re also excited to be joining forces with Acumen on a Skoll World Forum Ecosystem event in April, where we will be inviting corporate leaders as well as their potential partners - NGOs and social enterprises - to look for bolder ways to make the food and agriculture industries sustainable and more beneficial for small-holder farmers. Look out for our online discussion event in the same month on responsible sourcing, which will focus on how together we can eliminate modern slavery and child labour from global supply chains (pg. 31).

Finally I encourage you, our readers, to join us to build upon recent successes, which are included in this Issue. Going forwards, if you are looking for a safe, and supportive space to share your ideas and work on social impact, or want to scope out opportunities to collaborate with us, I would be only too pleased to help act as a catalyst. I invite you contact me anna@businessfightspoverty.org.

Anna Johnson, Editor - Online, Business Fights Poverty
In his recent interview at the BSR Conference 2018, Anand Giridharadas, author of “Winners Take All,” questioned the ability of sustainability professionals to change the world. “The kind of do-gooding, philanthropy, CSR, impact investing, social enterprise...that are essentially within a market frame”, he argued, “are intrinsically limited because...they are about changing the world in ways that keep the winners’ world the same.”

In a similar vein, Maria Hengeveld who attended Business Fights Poverty Oxford 2018, criticized the conference’s focus on corporate purpose in an article for The Nation (“Big Business Has a New Scam: The ‘Purpose Paradigm’”). “Contrary to its purported aim, the point of purpose isn’t to drive change”, she says. “It’s to make sure any change stays within the tightly bound comfort zone of the world’s most powerful executives.”

Purpose, it would seem, is under attack; seen as a veneer over the darker, negative impact of businesses on the social and environmental issues they claim to care about. There is a clear and deepening frustration amongst some with the rhetoric of “purpose”, “sustainability” and the notion of “business as a force for good”.

For those of us who believe in the power of business to do good, this is an opportunity for some honest self-reflection.

The ‘Purpose Paradigm’: SOLUTION OR SCAM?

There is a clear and deepening frustration amongst some with the rhetoric of “purpose”. For those of us who believe in the power of business to do good, this is an opportunity for some honest self-reflection. But ultimately purpose is still worth believing in for three good reasons.

1. **Purpose is being used by companies to fundamentally rethink business models**

   The fact that businesses are talking about purpose is a good thing, as it shifts their focus away from philanthropic CSR and towards thinking more deeply about the impacts they can have through their core business. The primary focus of many sustainability professionals I speak to is moving purpose beyond the confines of the sustainability department to the commercial and innovation functions of the business. A number of recent books are designed to help. David Grayson, Chris Coulter, and Mark Lee in their book, “All In – The Future of Business Leadership”, set out a roadmap for business leaders which starts by setting a clear, authentic and inspiring purpose. The primary focus of many sustainability professionals I speak to is moving purpose beyond the confines of the sustainability department to the commercial and innovation functions of the business. A number of recent books are designed to help. David Grayson, Chris Coulter, and Mark Lee in their book, “All In – The Future of Business Leadership”, set out a roadmap for business leaders which starts by setting a clear, authentic and inspiring purpose. The primary focus of many sustainability professionals I speak to is moving purpose beyond the confines of the sustainability department to the commercial and innovation functions of the business. A number of recent books are designed to help. David Grayson, Chris Coulter, and Mark Lee in their book, “All In – The Future of Business Leadership”, set out a roadmap for business leaders which starts by setting a clear, authentic and inspiring purpose. The primary focus of many sustainability professionals I speak to is moving purpose beyond the confines of the sustainability department to the commercial and innovation functions of the business. A number of recent books are designed to help. David Grayson, Chris Coulter, and Mark Lee in their book, “All In – The Future of Business Leadership”, set out a roadmap for business leaders which starts by setting a clear, authentic and inspiring purpose.
a purpose and doing something about it. Taking a wider view, Colin Mayer in “Prosperity: Better Business Makes the Greater Good” presents an agenda for companies and regulators to unlock the corporation’s “unique and powerful position to promote economic and social wellbeing in its fullest sense, for customers, for future generations, as well as for shareholders”.

One result is the growing number of examples of “inclusive” business models opening opportunities to more people in society, highlighted by the likes of The Inclusive Business Action Network and the United Nations Business Call to Action. A number of businesses are reshaping their entire business around their purpose. Recently, Danone announced its intention to certify its entire business as a “B Corporation”, a movement of over 2,600 companies that represent “a new kind of business that balances purpose and profit”. All this sits against the backdrop of a creative revolution underway inspired by Peter Drucker’s idea that “every single social and global issue of our day is a business opportunity in disguise”.

2. **The purpose paradigm is being driven at least as much by employees themselves**

Employees are embracing purpose to influence the direction of their companies and to call out inconsistencies between rhetoric and reality. There is a growing movement of purpose-driven employees who are looking for ways to use their companies’ products, services, value chains, and voice to have a positive social impact.

Recognising that every single employee has the potential to be a change agent, The League of Intrapreneurs is a global learning community of people driving change from within, providing peer-support and sharing the stories of people doing the hard work of shifting models. Gib Bulloch, in the “The Intrapreneur”, sets out his vision of a truly purpose-led business that focuses on creating innovative solutions to social and environmental challenges, with advice for those employees battling the “corporate immune system” to make this a reality. At our Skoll World Forum 2018 Ecosystem Event with The League, we explored the significance of social intrapreneurship and the welcome and growing interest among a number of businesses to develop systems and cultures that spur and sustain corporate social innovation right across the company.
3. Purpose inspires a shared journey of learning and improvement

We all know of examples where more needs to be done, but the direction of travel is a positive one. I personally know many committed people across business, civil society, academia, and government who are working intensively to embed purpose within business, and to scale the positive impact they have. The journey can be complex and difficult, and a priority for me is understanding how these individuals, no matter where they are on their journey, can be supported, encouraged and connected in a way that helps them move forward.

This is an unfinished journey, with new challenges and priorities emerging all the time. One such area is around forging new partnerships - for joint policy advocacy between business and civil society to drive more progressive policies on climate change and social issues; between business and governments to crowd-in the finance needed on critical social issues; and cross-sector collaboration to drive deeper, system-level change of the sort described at Business Fight Poverty Oxford 2017 by Kate Raworth and Jane Nelson.

The common ground between those within the business and purpose world, and those who criticize it, is the desire for authenticity. A recognition that we need to move beyond the rhetoric of purpose and embed it meaningfully into the everyday reality of business. Authenticity means striving for consistency: promoting positive impacts, while also ensuring a robust do-no-harm agenda (as set out in responsible business standards and principles, such as the UN Global Compact’s Ten Principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption); and ensuring lobbying positions are not working counter to stated societal priorities elsewhere in the business.

Authenticity also means being bold and comprehensive: while recognising the power of purpose to reach customers through brands and potential employees through recruitment, it also means seeing the value of setting purpose at the heart of the business’ strategy, systems and structures, and raising the bar on the outcomes we seek both for business and society. And importantly, it means getting better at measuring our impact and learning from what works and what does not (with a lot of valuable work being done in this space including, for example, the Positive Impact Initiative and the SDG Compass).

We need an honest discussion about how to embed purpose authentically within business, because done authentically, purpose can drive the deep change we are all looking for.

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

LARRY FINK’S ANNUAL OPEN LETTER TO CORPORATE CEOS IS FAST-BECOMING A FIXTURE AT THE START OF THE YEAR. FINK’S VIEWS MATTER. THEY CARRY WEIGHT. HE IS, AFTER ALL, THE CO-FOUNDER AND NOW CHAIRMAN AND CEO OF BLACKROCK - THE BIGGEST MONEY-MANAGEMENT FIRM IN THE WORLD WITH MORE THAN $6 TRILLION IN ASSETS UNDER MANAGEMENT

His 2019 letter to CEOs is entitled “Purpose & Profit”. In it, Fink declares:

“I wrote last year that every company needs a framework to navigate this difficult landscape, and that it must begin with a clear embodiment of your company’s purpose in your business model and corporate strategy. Purpose is not a mere tagline or marketing campaign; it is a company’s fundamental reason for being – what it does every day to create value for its stakeholders.”

Some critics of the growing interest in Business Purpose erroneously dismiss the pursuit of Purpose as a distraction from achieving profits, whereas it should be seen as a superior route to achieving sustainable profits over the long-term. As Fink declares:

“Purpose is not the sole pursuit of profits but the animating force for achieving them. Profits are in no way inconsistent with purpose – in fact, profits and purpose are inextricably linked. Profits are essential if a company is to effectively serve all of its stakeholders over time – not only shareholders, but also employees, customers, and communities.

Similarly, when a company truly understands and expresses its purpose, it functions with the focus and strategic discipline that drive long-term profitability. Purpose unifies management, employees, and communities. It drives ethical behavior and creates an essential check on actions that go against the best interests of stakeholders. Purpose guides culture, provides a framework for consistent decision-making, and, ultimately, helps sustain long-term financial returns for the shareholders of your company.”

Fink has subsequently been challenged to put his own money where his mouth is. The founder of the UK-headquartered think-tank Tomorrow’s Company, Mark Goyder, whilst...
endorsing the overall thrust of the letter, challenges Larry Fink:

“Here is the real test... Which investment products have you dropped because they do not reflect a focus on the long horizons that your clients are planning for? Have you examined the impact of short selling on the behaviour and long termism of the companies in which you invest? Have you significantly changed the basis of your people’s remuneration away from yearly targets and bonuses? How do you reconcile the short-termism of many of your funds with your stated belief in your 2019 letter that a focus on the long term is essential if companies are to serve society as well as their shareholders?”

Goyder goes on to observe: “Last year when I was discussing Fink’s 2018 letter with a group of CEOs and investors, one of them said, ‘Great letter. I wish he would send it to his own fund managers’. So, Larry, answering those challenges effectively would make your 2020 Letter to CEOs even more persuasive.”

I agree!

There is a growing interest in business purpose reflected in the work of organisations like Tomorrow’s Company and Blueprint for Better Business and in the writing of authors such as Anita Hoffmann (Purpose and Impact), John O’Brien and Andrew Cave (The Power of Purpose), Neil

This growth in interest has not gone uncriticized. In a highly critical, on-line polemic, Gates Fellow and Cambridge doctoral student Maria Hengeveld argued that “Big Business Has a New Scam: The ‘Purpose Paradigm’” and alleged that “Multinational corporations are luring millennial workers with empty promises and self-serving slogans.”

In his article, Business Fights Poverty founder, Zahid Torres-Rahman, responds to the Hengeveld article, suggesting some important benefits of purpose, but acknowledging that “there is a clear and deepening frustration amongst some with the rhetoric of “purpose.”” He urges that “those of us who believe in the power of business to do good,” should use articles like Hengeveld’s as “an opportunity for some honest self-reflection.”

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1 “Larry Fink’s 2020 letter to investors gives us more questions than answers”, Goyder, 2019
SO, SEIZING THE “OPPORTUNITY FOR SOME HONEST SELF-REFLECTION.”

As Chris Coulter, Mark Lee and I argue in our 2018 book: All In – The Future of Business Leadership, if companies want to truly embed sustainability, then Purpose has to be the foundational attribute. Purpose explains why the business exists. It cannot, however, be pursued in isolation. It requires a comprehensive Plan (Strategy) to bring it to life, which extends both across the business and its value-chain; a culture which supports it (innovative, engaging and empowering, responsible and ethical, and open, transparent & accountable); collaboration with a range of business and other partners to scale impact; and advocacy (speaking out and speaking up for social justice and sustainable development) to amplify and nurture the conditions that favour sustainability.

We have to get sharper, collectively, with a narrative that explains how Purpose and Sustainability inter-relate. Look out for a short note on this from a group of Purpose and Sustainability thinkers that Ben Kellard – now with CISL Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership – is currently pulling together, in a personal capacity.

Purpose should be an explicitly stated vision and authentic belief that defines the value that the company seeks to create for itself and society, directs key business decisions in the way value is created, aligns everyone in the business towards a common goal, guides how the company engages its stakeholders, and provides the organization with courage to foster positive change. Or as an important paper, “The What, The Why And The How Of Purpose - A guide for leaders” published by CMI, says: Purpose is “An organisation’s meaningful and enduring reason to exist that aligns with long-term financial performance, provides a clear context for daily decision making and unifies and motivates relevant stakeholders.”

Purpose needs senior leadership buy-in and to be supported by their evangelism – but also needs to be owned by employees generally. The uncovering of what is the purpose of the business cannot be contracted out nor rushed. It seems some of the most effective processes have started with employees having the opportunity to identify their own personal purposes. Once the business purpose is defined, it has to be fully socialised, with employees able to explore the implications for what the business will do – and also crucially won’t do. There has to be a clear link to values and behaviours. This is why new work which academics Charles Ebert, David Stillwell and Jaideep Prabhu from the University of Cambridge and Victoria Hurth from Plymouth University are starting to examine, how to check the Purpose pulse of an organisation, is going to be so important.

Personally, I always try to be a “glass half-full” type of person. I always tell my Cranfield students: healthy scepticism and challenge is good, but cynicism is corrosive. Collectively, we certainly need to “kick the tyres” on the debates and practice around business purpose. We also need to make a far better job of “joining the dots” and showing how important ideas fit together; but let us also build on the positive developments taking place.

David Grayson, Author and Emeritus Professor of Corporate Responsibility at Cranfield School of Management
As my colleague, Zahid, discusses in his article, there is a clear and deepening frustration amongst some with the rhetoric of “purpose”. For those of us who believe in the power of business to do good, this is an opportunity for some honest self-reflection. The key is “authenticity”; the recognition we need to move beyond the rhetoric of purpose and embed it meaningfully and consistently across business.

On Thursday 11 July, Business Fights Poverty Oxford 2019 (#BFPOXF19), our annual flagship event at Said Business School, University of Oxford, will create a space for an honest, constructive and practical discussion about business and purpose - looking at how this is being done, recognising where progress is being made and where actions are falling short.

You can apply to join an invited group of 300 professionals and practitioners working to embed purpose authentically within business. Engage with peers from leading global companies, civil society and government who are pioneering new ways to harness companies’ products, services, value chains, and voice to have a positive social impact.

This one-day experience will combine inspiring plenaries on how companies are driving action and taking stands on societal issue, and with practical deep-dive knowledge zones focused on: partnerships, women’s economic empowerment,
corporate social innovation, responsible supply chains, and purpose.

At Business Fights Poverty we believe in the power of purposeful collaboration. Our aim is to go beyond the standard conference attendee experience and drive a year-round process of collaboration. Through interactive workshops, curated discussions, delegate-led sessions and spaces carefully crafted to amplify collaboration, we maximise the positive interactions and connections people can make during the event.

We will be working hard with a range of event partners, such as Oxfam, WBCSD, WWF, The League of Intrapreneurs and The Partnering Initiative, to create a truly memorable event. Last year, 88% of participants surveyed said they made a valuable new connection for their work; 95% said they learnt something valuable for a current or future collaboration; and 98% said they would recommend the event to a colleague. We’ll be trying to raise our game again this year!

Katie Hyson, Director of Thought Leadership, Business Fights Poverty

IN ADDITION TO APPLYING FOR A PLACE, THIS YEAR YOU CAN:

APPLY TO BE A FEATURED SPEAKER:

We’re looking for great speakers! If you or your organisation would like to be a featured speaker at Business Fights Poverty Oxford 2019, contact Katie Hyson at katie@businessfightspoverty.org with:

- a 200-word summary of the topic and its fit with the conference theme of embedding purpose authentically into business. This should outline the pressing social issue, why business and their partners need to collaborate in order to create systemic change (this could cover new solutions or be a call for action raising awareness of the issue); and how the topic could be brought to life, going beyond a standard speaker presentation; and
- a three-sentence speaker bio.

BECOME A BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY AMBASSADOR:

We are inviting a selected number of people to become Business Fights Poverty Ambassadors to help drive meaningful connection and collaboration at the event and beyond. Get a free place at the event and take on an active role that will help build your own connections and make the day deeply valuable for everyone. To find out more and to apply, please contact Anna Johnson at anna@businessfightspoverty.org with:

- a 200-word summary of explaining why you are interested in the conference theme of embedding purpose authentically into business; and a three-sentence bio.

BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY (#BFPOXF19)

will be a chance for us to reflect, connect and drive forward real change.
EACH WEEK OUR SPOTLIGHT INTERVIEWS 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.

AMANDA GARDINER
Amanda Gardiner, Vice President of Global Sustainability & Social Innovation, Pearson. Amanda shares an insider’s perspective on the opportunities she is seeing for Pearson and other businesses to integrate sustainability into their core business.

CAREEN ABB
Careen Abb, Programme Lead, UNEP Positive Impact Initiative. Careen explains why addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their large financing gap, requires an impact analysis implementation framework to be applied up front.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE PODCAST ON ITUNES
These spotlight interviews are available as podcasts on the Business Fights Poverty website and also on iTunes (https://snipbfp.org/iTunes-1). If you would like to be a part of our Spotlight Interview series or would like to nominate someone, please contact: katie@businessfightspoverty.org
Daniella Foster, Senior Director of Global Corporate Responsibility at Hilton Hotels and Resorts. Daniella talks about their new sustainability strategy ‘Travel with Purpose,’ their 2030 goals and their mission to redefine travel and tourism.

Andrew Howard, Head of Sustainable Research within the Sustainable Investment department, Schroders. Andrew explains what ESG investing is, why people across the financial system are increasingly taking it seriously and shares updates on the latest in financial trends.

Emeritus Professor David Grayson, CBE. David shares his thoughts on why business plays such a vital role in delivering societal impact, what has changed and why these are real business opportunities, quoting the late and great Peter Drucker, who in 1973 stated: “Every single social and global issue of our day, is a business opportunity in disguise.”

Sizakele Marutlulle, Founder and CEO of communications strategy company: Marutlulle +CO. Sizakele explores what being a black female leader means in to her, how purposeful business drives everything she does and why she has embarked on a PhD to explore society’s expectations of women to have children.

Henriette Kolb, Head of the Gender Secretariat at the International Finance Corporation. Henriette talks about the challenges of addressing gender inequality, before explaining why the IFC is focusing on balancing the roles of carers, creating access to finance for female entrepreneurs and understanding how women can get ahead in the sharing economy.

Sue Garrard, former Unilever SVP for Sustainable Business Development and Communications. Sue explores the speed of the sustainability agenda’s evolution and why the pace is making it hard to handle; what happens to brands that deeply understand and listen to their consumers; and how senior leaders who don’t make social and environmental factors core to their business are missing out.

Zahid Torres-Rahman, Co-Founder and CEO, Business Fights Poverty. Zahid talks about where is belief in the power of connection and collaboration comes from, and what he sees as the most important trends on the horizon.

Yvette-Torres-Rahman, Co-Founder, Business Fights Poverty. Yvette explains why the network was set up to help support people in business who are trying to have a more positive social impact and that she is convinced that the tipping point is in reach – so long as we just ask for help.
HOW IS BUSINESS RETHINKING GENERATION PURPOSE?
A FEW THOUGHTS FROM A PURPOSE-DRIVEN MILLENNIAL

WHO ARE MILLENNIALS?

Millennials make up 27% of the global population or about 2 billion people (Pew Research Center, Global Business Policy Council, accessed October 2018)

By 2025 75% of workforce will comprise millennials (Brookings Data Now, 2014)

WHY MIGHT MILLENNIALS BE THINKING DIFFERENTLY?
MILLENNIALS, AS ADULTS, HAVE HAD THE INTERNET, MOBILE PHONES, GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY AND SOCIAL MEDIA.

In their lifetimes millennials have already been exposed to 9/11, the war on terror, the global financial crisis, chronic malnourishment which affects 821 million people (FAO, 2017), over 40 civil wars (IRIN, 2017) and the global consensus that climate change will be irreversible, and affect millions if not billions of people.

During this same time 700 million people have been raised out of poverty (AEI, 2015), literacy rate for people ages 15 years old and above stands at 86% (World Bank, 2016), 174 Nations have formally signed up to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and 193 to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals .

THE QUESTION:
HOW CAN BUSINESS RESPOND TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF MILLENNIALS, AS THEY PIONEER NEW STYLES OF LEADERSHIP, PUSH FOR GREATER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE, AND HAVE AN INCREASINGLY HOLISTIC VIEW ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE?
MY JOURNEY TO PURPOSE:

I am Anna Johnson, Editor, Online at Business Fights Poverty. After graduating from my MSc in January 2018 and with my 30th birthday looming large, I re-evaluated what I wanted from the next phase of my career and my life. This exercise transformed into a research project, which led me into conversation with fellow millennials on the same or similar journeys. During the process I observed a recurring theme; our generations’ insatiable appetite to go against the grain, change the status quo, and derive greater meaning from the work we do. You could argue this has happened before, but I don’t think this ambition is rooted in hippy love, or running the rat race. Instead, it is about believing we have the power to do things differently, working with the system to make it fit for the future and a positive force; to be ‘purpose-driven’.

But what does it mean to be ‘purpose-driven’? In a world moving at breakneck speed, where the pace of life has changed unrecognisably within the last 20 years - what millennials want in terms of career fulfilment is being shaped somewhat differently to the generations that have come before. Speaking from personal experience, I do not get my thrills from promises of hefty paychecks and promotions for hitting targets, and I have come to the conclusion that this is because these things do not resonate with my core values and immediate concerns.

There are many businesses putting their brand and their money behind behaving ethically, committing to improving society and moving beyond simply delivering shareholder return, yet “only a minority (of millennials) now believe that corporations behave ethically (48% versus 65% the year before) and that business leaders are committed to helping improve society (47% versus 62%). Three-quarters see businesses around the world focusing on their own agendas rather than considering the wider society (up from 59%), and nearly two-thirds say companies have no ambition beyond wanting to make money (up from 50%)” (Deloitte, 2018).

BUSINESS AND THE WAR ON MILLENNIAL TALENT:

The relationship between millennials and business is evolving. Therefore, to successfully navigate this change, companies must do more to understand the values of the next generation of business leaders. As career-related aspirations are changing, and increasingly, the focus is on people working with purpose - how are the leading businesses responding to this enormous opportunity?

“Companies that understand the increasing emphasis of purpose in today’s professional landscape improve their ability to attract such employees and also their ability to retain them for longer periods of time.”

(Reid Hoffman, Executive Chairman and Co-Founder, Linkedin, 2016)

WHAT BUSINESSES CAN DO TO ADDRESS THE SITUATION:

Recent evidence serves as a signal to businesses that are on a mission to attract, hire and retain the best talent which so often means proactively responding to the drive for purpose should perhaps consider:

Demonstrating how business leaders ‘walk the walk, and talk the talk’; leadership which positively defines company culture and articulates the business’ social purpose.

Acknowledging millennial potential and proactively supporting millennial perspectives, ideas and innovations.
Sharing their understanding of their business’ transformative capacity, societal impact and responsibility.

Being authentic: no window-dressing, greenwashing, or purpose-washing.

Being transparent: a company that is willing to say ‘This is where we’re at, we know we can do better, so this is what we are going to do about it.’

Simple on paper and tough in practice, these five considerations do of course need support from joined up recruitment and onboarding practices, that enable candidates and new recruits to demonstrate their vision and ambition. However, “One-half of organizations cite factors such as a low number of applicants (51%), lack of the needed work experience among candidates (50%) and competition from other employers (49%) as reasons for difficulty finding candidates for their open positions” (SHRM, 2016) As global businesses continue to report that it is tough to find and retain the talent they need for their future, how can businesses rethink Generation Purpose?

In our mission to support businesses to find social solutions, I, in my role within Business Fights Poverty and as a millennial, would like to deepen the understanding of success of Generation Purpose engagement.

Therefore, if your business is grappling with the millennial question or has a story you would like to share, I am inviting you to engage with Business Fights Poverty and:

- Deepen understanding of what really matters to millennials in terms of career fulfillment and purpose.
- Find solutions to bridging the gap between company purpose and millennial recruitment, retention and performance.
- Develop enabling processes that support business and millennial ambitions.

I look forward to hearing from you and to continuing this conversation, please contact anna@businessfightspoverty.org

Anna Johnson, Editor, Online at Business Fights Poverty
THE ROLE OF BUSINESS IN EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

OUR RECENT REPORT DEMONSTRATES HOW BUSINESS CAN HELP PEOPLE GAIN THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, NAVIGATE THE FUTURE OF WORK AND CREATE A MORE PROSPEROUS SOCIETY. THE WORK WAS LED BY BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY, PEARSON, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY AND PRME, AN INITIATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT.

Education is at the heart of human progress and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It enables people to build better lives and equips business and society to address our world’s interconnected issues and opportunities.

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Our new report demonstrates how business can help people gain the skills and knowledge to advance sustainable development, navigate the future of work and create a more prosperous society. Following recent interviews with educators and companies, the report shares insights and recommendations for business to promote education and training for sustainable development. The work was led by a consortium of partners, including Business Fights Poverty, Pearson, Arizona State University and PRME, an initiative of the United Nations Global Compact.

Business has a strong incentive to invest in strengthening skills and knowledge for sustainable development. Companies’ performance and progress on the SDGs are increasingly linked to opportunities and risks driven by environmental and social trends. Skills for sustainable development are vital for business leadership, innovation and a productive, adaptable workforce. Companies can gain a competitive advantage by equipping their employees with the skills and knowledge needed to make the most of the opportunities ahead.

Contributions from companies including Starbucks, Levi’s, Credit Suisse, Anglo American and others show how business is investing in developing future leaders and engaging employees through shared solutions for business and society. These examples describe how business can support educational programmes and experiential learning, build employees’ skills and knowledge, and partner with community stakeholders.
THE REPORT OFFERS FIVE
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
BUSINESS:

Collaborate with partners to advance education for sustainable development and connect it to job skills and career paths. Companies can engage and build partnerships beyond business schools across other departments and programmes. They can help integrate practical sustainable development issues and insights from business into course and programme design, instruction and experiential learning opportunities.

Invest in employee training and education for sustainable development. Companies can make sustainable development training central to leadership development programs. They can motivate employees through using active learning approaches and exploring real sustainable development examples that connect employees with the company’s purpose and values.

Share business learnings on what works – and what doesn’t – for sustainable development. Educators, businesses and international organizations all need more widely-shared examples of practical business experience, and the lessons that emerge from them. Companies can be more open about providing insights from tracking successes and failures in the company’s sustainable development-related initiatives.

Highlight the business demand for sustainable development skills and knowledge. Business leaders can show HR teams, recruiters, policymakers and academics that sustainable development skills and knowledge are priorities for business. Clear signals from business will help education providers prioritize learning for sustainable development.

Educate and engage other stakeholders on sustainable development, from suppliers and investors to policymakers and customers. Companies can help to demystify sustainable development through portraying it as a normal part of business life. Businesses can benefit from showing how action on sustainable development is central to their everyday work, and essential for a flourishing society, inclusive economic growth and human progress.

Business, educators and learners all have a stake in the future of work and job skills. The ability to adapt to the changing needs of the economy and workforce is closely connected to progress on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The role of business in education and training for sustainable development plays a significant part in delivering on this ambitious agenda.

David Norman, Challenge Director, Business Fights Poverty
NEARLY THREE YEARS AFTER FORMALLY ADOPTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS), IT IS INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT GOVERNMENTS FACE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES THAT COULD UNDERMINE PROGRESS.

Businesses and civil society are increasingly combining their voices and influence through specific delivery partnerships and broader coalitions to drive the policies and resources needed to achieve implementation.

These include fiscal constraints, lack of political will, institutional failures and state fragility. Moreover, governments are always under pressure to deliver short-term results, but many of the complex systemic challenges being addressed through the SDGs require long-term integrated policy reforms that need to be pursued far beyond most government and electoral lifecycles.

These constraints point to the need for active engagement by civil society organisations and companies, not to replicate government responsibilities or let them “off the hook”, but to mobilize resources and advocate for policy reforms in support of the SDGs.

A growing area of collaboration between civil society and business in support of the SDGs is emerging in the form of joint policy advocacy. Businesses and civil society are increasingly combining their voices and influence through specific delivery partnerships and broader coalitions to drive the policies and resources needed to achieve implementation.

Historically, civil society has been at the forefront of environmental and social advocacy and campaigning but in recent years there has been a notable willingness amongst companies, at least among those integrating sustainability goals into their core values and business models, to publicly take similar policy positions and to advocate strongly for them.

Individual advocacy by civil society and business plays an important role but we believe is insufficient to drive the long-term changes to policy and practice needed to achieve the scale and ambition of the SDGs. Business advocacy on its own may lack sufficient recognition of wider social and environmental challenges outside the core business and supply chain. Civil society advocacy may lack influence with senior policy makers and the necessary resources to sustain activity. Individual advocacy by both sectors can also be undermined by issues of trust, credibility and legitimacy.
Our new guide to advocacy collaboration, produced in partnership with Anglo American, GSK, Mars, International Alert, Oxfam and Save the Children, highlights three opportunities to drive change in support of the SDGs.

First, by pooling expertise, evidence and insights, both sectors are better able to understand issues, agree shared priorities and identify new and better ways to tackle complex systemic challenges. Through the process of collaboration itself, they can build the political capital that transformational change requires.

Second, given that structural and mindset change is hard to achieve, unlikely partners advocating together can help to shift old attitudes and norms and enable wider reach to non-traditional stakeholder groups and opinion leaders. The ability of companies and NGOs to combine economic arguments with social, humanitarian and environmental messages can be particularly effective in gaining attention and changing the way policy makers conceptualise issues.

Third, advocacy collaboration can also build a deeper understanding of complex issues between and within organisations, which generates internal shifts in attitudes, behaviours and practices over time and enables organisations to build the trust necessary to move into more challenging policy spaces.

But advocacy collaboration can be hard to deliver in practice. Participating organisations need to be prepared to navigate operational, governance and reputational challenges.

To help overcome these challenges, we have identified six key building blocks for responsible and effective advocacy collaboration which should be considered when designing and implementing joint advocacy initiatives. When used, these building blocks can strengthen trust between advocacy partners and increase the perceived legitimacy and impact of joint advocacy.

To fully realise the potential of joint advocacy, new mindsets and skillsets will be needed by all sectors. Governments need to establish policy priorities and frameworks that bring together all sectors and incentivise action and collaboration. Business needs to build a deeper understanding of the broader systemic challenges beyond their core operations and supply chains and ensure consistency between internal policies and practices and external lobbying and advocacy. Civil society organisations need to be more open to balancing mandates to challenge business with a recognition that business needs to be part of the solution in many cases, and to aligning their own internal programmes, ranging from campaigning to cooperation.

When effective, advocacy collaboration can be a useful mechanism for combining the resources and voices of diverse organisations in a way that governments will at a minimum listen to, and ideally consult and engage with more strategically in a common quest to achieve the SDGs.

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS
THE CASE OF CARGILL AND CARE

CARGILL AND CARE’S 50-YEAR PARTNERSHIP OFFERS INSIGHTS AND LESSONS FOR ANYONE LOOKING TO BUILD AN EFFECTIVE AND LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP. IN OUR NEW BRIEFING PAPER, WE SET OUT SUCCESS FACTORS ACROSS FIVE Pillars THAT OTHERS WISHING TO CREATE OR SUSTAIN THEIR CORPORATE-NGO PARTNERSHIPS CAN ADAPT.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—the internationally-agreed goals for people and planet—encapsulate a vision for the world we want to see. It is widely recognised that if we are to deliver on this vision, and defend progress already made, we must all—business, civil society and government—partner more effectively and more deeply than ever.

THE CORPORATE-NGO BUSINESS CASE:
Cargill and CARE’s 50-year partnership offers insights and lessons for anyone looking to build an effective and long-term partnership. In our new Briefing Paper, we explore the benefits that both Cargill – the corporate and CARE – the NGO experience from their partnership. We formulate a six-point business case that others wishing to create or sustain their corporate-NGO partnerships can adapt.

HOW TO CREATE TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS
We also describe how this partnership has evolved from a primarily philanthropic relationship to one that, especially over the past 10 years, has genuinely drawn on the capabilities, skills and resources of the two partners.

The Briefing paper proposes a model of corporate-NGO partnership evolution, from transactional to transformational. As partnerships evolve, we observe a ‘dialling up’ of the success factors across five pillars: towards one that involves convening partners around an ambitious shared purpose in a way that drives mutual value; a process that is based on co-creation; and an authentic approach to both internal communication and external communication. Based on interviews with experts across Cargill and CARE, both centrally and in-country offices this resonates strongly with their partnership experience.

We look forward to learning from your own experiences of building partnerships to deliver the ambition of the SDGs.

Zahid Torres-Rahman, Business Fights Poverty, Michelle Grogg, Cargill and Marcela Hahn, CARE USA
THE INTRAPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM: CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR SOCIAL INTRAPRENEURS TO THRIVE

As more and more companies commit to using their core business to help meet the Global Goals, the spotlight is falling on social intrapreneurs – those talented individuals working inside organisations to generate and develop innovative ideas for projects with social impact. Much has been written about what makes an intrapreneur: the characteristics and attributes, the skill sets and mindset needed to challenge the status quo and think outside the box. In 2017, Business Fights Poverty hosted a Challenge that explored what know-how social intrapreneurs need to help them create, develop, launch and scale up new initiatives with social impact. That Challenge culminated in a series of short videos and practical tip sheets for social innovators, which are available to download at https://snipbfp.org/intrapreneur

In 2018, with our partners at The League of Intrapreneurs, we widened our focus beyond the individual intrapreneur to take in the bigger organisational systems within which they operate. We wanted to know: How can companies create a supportive environment for social innovation ideas to be generated, tested and taken to scale, while serving their core business interests. In short, what conditions do social intrapreneurs need to thrive inside an organisation?

To find an answer to these questions, Business Fights Poverty, The League of Intrapreneurs, the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID), CEMEX and The BMW Foundation undertook a six-month, collaborative process to understand the key components of the Intrapreneurship ‘Ecosystem’ – that complex set of processes, practices, resources and relationships which collectively serve to facilitate or inhibit intrapreneurship and social innovation.

Together, we hosted workshops around the world - from Berlin to Brazil - to better
understand barriers to and enablers for social innovation and intrapreneurship. We ran online discussions and learning sprints to capture the insights of our global communities and interviewed dozens of intrapreneurs, leaders and subject matter experts. Weighing in from back offices and boardrooms, our global communities homed in on several internal and external factors that comprise the Intrapreneurship Ecosystem.

We are delighted to share the product of this collaborative thinking, learning and creating: a guide that provides a framework for understanding the Intrapreneurship Ecosystem. Our intention with the guide is to contribute to the growing body of knowledge about incubating, scaling and replicating successful inclusive business models and social innovation. The guide identifies four key components of the internal Intrapreneurship Ecosystem: Purpose beyond Profit, People as Change Agents, Power of We and the Generative Pipeline. It explains the ways in which each element can either serve to help intrapreneurship to flourish, or hinder the process of innovative ideas being generated, developed and scaled. While the Intrapreneurship Ecosystem includes both internal and external factors, as well as those that cross company boundaries, the focus in this guide is on the internal ecosystem and specifically those factors a company can actively manage and act upon to encourage social innovation and support intrapreneurs.

For each of the four key components, we offer a set of guiding questions to help companies assess how they are performing in that area. We explore the primary tensions in each area that companies face when attempting to stimulate social innovation. And, finally, we share examples of how leading companies are working to proactively address these tensions and, in effect, redesign their companies from the top down and bottom up.

While much of the guidance is equally applicable to other organisations wishing to stimulate social innovation, from donors to NGOs, the primary intended audience is companies who wish to use their core business to increase their positive impact on society and the environment. We hope that the guide will be especially useful to intrapreneurs and managers responsible for stimulating or supporting social innovation inside established businesses, who want to ensure that their organisational culture and practical set-up provide the best environment for intrapreneurship to flourish.

Our intention is to build on the insights shared in the guide to collaborate with companies to create practical tools that will help them to unlock the human potential in their organisations to change the world.

We are continuing the exploration of this important question with our communities and relevant partners in person and online. Our intention is to build on the insights shared in the guide to collaborate with companies to create practical tools that will help them to unlock the human potential in their organisations to change the world.

If you are interested in learning more or getting involved in a future phase of this work, please get in touch with Zahid Torres-Rahman at Business Fights Poverty (zahid@businessfightspoverty.org) or Maggie De Pree at The League of Intrapreneurs (maggie@leagueofintrapreneurs.com)

Hester Le Roux, former Challenge Director, Business Fights Poverty

https://snipbfp.org/IEmag
There is widespread agreement that business has a key role to play in the global refugee response. This is not only because the scale of the challenge is too large for any one actor or sector but also because the entire nature of displacement is changing.

Of the more than 25 million refugees globally, the highest figure ever recorded, many are living in protracted situations with no immediate end in sight. Most also reside outside camp settings, relying less on donor aid and more on local infrastructure and services and political will of host country governments.

Put simply, the refugee response is now both a sprint and a marathon. It demands speed and efficient interventions alongside endurance and long-term development solutions. It is also about a “whole-of-society” approach that prioritizes integration and engagement with local communities rather than isolated interventions, removed from local realities.

As a key creator of jobs and important provider of goods, services, and investment, large and small companies are an essential part of helping countries and entire economies prepare and respond to an influx of refugees.

The Need for Speed and Endurance

Our report, “Resilience Through Refugee-Inclusive Business”, includes a taxonomy of 17 practical business models and a series of in-depth briefs on what it will take to mobilise more business and scale solutions that help refugees thrive, not just survive.

FROM PLEDGES TO PRACTICE

More companies are interested in supporting the refugee response beyond simply charitable contributions, by drawing on their core expertise, resources, and influence with consumers, suppliers, and government. More than 70 companies have made commitments to support the refugee response under the Tent Partnership for Refugees. They see this not only as a moral obligation but also a social and economic imperative.

Working with Pearson, UNHCR, Mercy Corps, Business Call to Action, Thomson Reuters Foundation and Innovest Advisory our new report addresses the question, How can we mobilise more business action to support refugee livelihoods and long-term resilience? We have co-created a series of papers analysing how businesses can better include refugees in their value chains. We deep dive into three practical models: on digital education, buying from refugee-owned and inclusive enterprises, and off-grid energy solutions. Each model provides an opportunity to spur business action and partnerships to improve refugees’ wellbeing and economic inclusion so they can thrive, not just survive.

Jessica Davis Pluess, Challenge Director, Business Fights Poverty
More companies are interested in supporting the refugee response beyond simply charitable contributions.
DOING BUSINESS WITH INTEGRITY IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS AND SOCIETY

OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY HAS BEEN WORKING WITH THE UK GOVERNMENT’S BUSINESS INTEGRITY INITIATIVE, SUPPORTED BY DFID, FCO AND DIT, WHICH AIMS TO HELP SMES TO ANTICIPATE AND AVOID BRIBERY, CORRUPTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS RISKS WHEN DOING BUSINESS IN FRONTIER MARKETS.

The Business Integrity Initiative has established an online hub (https://snipbfp.org/BIIhub) that signposts companies to anti-corruption and human rights guidance and provides support to SMES on anti-bribery and corruption compliance and prevention. The goal is to encourage companies to put integrity at the heart of their business strategies and practices. This in turn will help developing countries to attract long-term, sustainable investment while reducing the supply of bribes and human rights abuses by UK companies. Bribery and corruption remain major barriers to global trade and development.

Our work with the Business Integrity Initiative has focused on identifying the best ways to engage SMES with the case for doing business with integrity. Initial research among UK businesses, in particular SMEs, suggests on the one hand, a lack of awareness and understanding of the corruption risks associated with exporting to and importing from frontier markets and the requirements of the UK Bribery Act, and, on the other, the potential business benefits that can arise from doing business with integrity.

Doing business with integrity is essential for all companies, everywhere, but SMEs especially face disproportionately higher risks in frontier markets as they often lack the expertise in house to manage bribery and corruption risks and the ability to influence the behavior of their business partners. Notwithstanding the need to manage the risks, the over-riding message coming out of our research and engagement with a range of companies and business networks is that investing in business integrity builds competitive advantage and delivers tangible business benefits.

Demonstrating business integrity policies and practices, e.g. codes of ethics, anti-bribery and corruption policies is not only becoming standard business operating practice but also essential for building the trust that underpins successful long-term commercial relationships with suppliers and customers. Our research confirms that 72% of UK SMEs who responded to our survey expect the ability to demonstrate strong anti-bribery and corruption policies and practices will become increasingly important to their business over
the next 5yrs. 65% of respondents think that customers will be the biggest drivers of this trend. The bottom line is that it is going to get much harder to work internationally with your customers and suppliers if you don’t have a robust integrity policy in place. Our SME survey revealed that 90% of UK SMEs cite doing business with integrity as important or very important to commercial success and 60% said that being able to show strong anti-bribery and corruption track record has created commercial benefit.

Through our work, we have identified a number of companies that are benefiting from doing business with integrity. They include Forensic Pathways, Dints, MLM, and Coltraco Ultrasonics, who are enjoying significant commercial success in frontier markets by putting integrity at the heart of their business model and relationships with commercial partners.

Beyond building more sustainable commercial relationships and avoiding the risk of breaking the law and getting prosecuted, investing in integrity also strengthens brand and company reputation, leads to more motivated employees and eliminates the risk of ongoing uncontrolled costs to the business that hit margins and profits over the long-term.

Another key message coming out of our work is that it is vital that SMEs do not wait for an integrity issue to arise. Companies, especially those targeting opportunities in higher risk markets, need to be proactive in ensuring the company anticipates and is ready to manage an integrity issue before it arises. The companies we highlight above have all taken the time to familiarise themselves with the risks in their chosen markets, to ensure anti-bribery and corruption policies and practices are embedded into business operations, processes and culture. They have also incentivised doing business with integrity among employees and engaged customers and suppliers with anti-bribery and corruption policies and compliance requirements.

And large companies also have a key role to play, especially those that have large numbers of SMEs in their supply chains. It is clear that leading companies are moving away from a “one strike and you’re out” compliance mindset to a more empathetic and supportive approach, which emphasises building the capacity of partner SMEs to do business with integrity.

Anglo American is one such company, and is currently scaling up its training and capacity building initiative for SME partners, which includes a strong business integrity emphasis.

We need to be realistic. Business integrity is just one of many challenges SMEs face when doing business in frontier markets and it’s going to take time to change mindsets and behaviours.

Richard Gilbert, Challenge Director, Business Fights Poverty

1 Business Fights Poverty SME Survey, November 2018
2 ibid
3 ibid
GET INVOLVED

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 SHARED CHALLENGE, WITH A FOCUS ON DELIVERING A 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 20 Challenges in the last couple of years on a wide variety of topics ranging from farmer livelihoods to corporate social innovation, from advocacy partnerships to scaling inclusive distribution models. We have new Challenges focused on:

- WHAT ROLE CAN BUSINESS PLAY IN TACKLING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?
- WHAT CAN LARGE BUSINESSES DO TO STRENGTHEN SME ECOSYSTEMS IN FRONTIER MARKETS?
- HOW CAN WE BUILD TRANSFORMATIONAL CORPORATE-NGO PARTNERSHIPS?
- HOW CAN WE EMBED PURPOSE AUTHENTICALLY INTO BUSINESS?

If you work for a university, think tank 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.

If you work for a company, please get in touch to see whether we can help you access fresh solutions to complex implementation challenges, build meaningful relationships with peers and stakeholders, or develop new stand-out, thought leadership on a priority issue.

We are grateful to our many supporters and partners, listed on our website. We are proud to be an award-winning B Corp, reflecting the values that sit at the heart of our organisation.

WE ARE EXPLORING POTENTIAL CHALLENGES ON ETHICAL RECRUITMENT, FARMER LIVELIHOODS, IMPACT MEASUREMENT AND INCLUSIVE BUSINESS INNOVATION. IF YOU HAVE A NEW IDEA, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH!
ONLINE DISCUSSION: THE FUTURE OF WORK: HOW BUSINESS CAN SUPPORT AN INCLUSIVE TRANSITION?
Exploring how businesses can help not just their own internal talent and skills development during the fourth work revolution but also the wider communities they serve and in which they operate.
Register to join the discussion here: 31st Jan 19 / 15:00 GMT / 10:00 EST

ONLINE DISCUSSION: FROM TRANSACTIONAL TO TRANSFORMATIONAL SOCIAL IMPACT PARTNERSHIPS, HOW CAN WE PARTNER MORE EFFECTIVELY?
If we are to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, and defend progress already made, we must, all—business, civil society and government—partner more effectively and more deeply than ever - but how?
21st Feb 19 / 15:00 GMT / 10:00 EST

ONLINE DISCUSSION: WHAT ROLE CAN BUSINESS PLAY IN ADDRESSING ISSUES AROUND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?
Companies have joined movements and introduced policies to reduce incidences of GBV and its effects, but GBV still has a high prevalence. So what more can companies do and what can they learn from each other and experts in related fields, in order to contribute to tackling GBV?
28th Mar 19 / 15:00 GMT / 10:00 EDT

EVENT: SKOLL WORLD FORUM ECOSYSTEM EVENT
In partnership with Acumen, Business Fights Poverty will be focusing on cross-sector collaboration for sustainable supply chains, with the need for business model innovation a core theme. At this forum, we will be inviting corporate leaders as well as their potential partners - NGOs and social enterprises - to look for bolder ways to make the food and agriculture industries sustainable and more beneficial for small-holder farmers
9 Apr 19 / St Annes, Oxford University

ONLINE DISCUSSION: HOW CAN BUSINESS PARTNER TO DRIVE RESPONSIBLE SOURCING?
Companies are increasingly focusing on issues that will impact their supply chains including climate change and human rights. Leading corporations recognise that these issues impact their business, their bottom lines and the future prosperity of the communities in which they operate; many realise that they can’t address these issues alone - collaboration is taking place at unprecedented levels, but is it enough?
18th Apr 19 / 15:00 BST / 10:00 EDT

ONLINE DISCUSSION: WHAT CAN LARGE BUSINESSES DO TO STRENGTHEN SME ECOSYSTEMS IN FRONTIER MARKETS?
Large businesses operating in frontier markets rely on many Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in their value chain. We will explore how businesses can enhance the effectiveness of their SME support, by taking a more holistic approach; one that starts from an understanding of the wider business ecosystem in which SMEs operate and the multiple external barriers to growth that they face. Why, when and how should business take an ecosystems approach to SME development?
16th May 19 / 15:00 BST / 10:00 EDT

ONLINE DISCUSSION: HOW CAN BUSINESSES ADVOCATE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS IN A WAY THAT IS EFFECTIVE AND AUTHENTIC?
The discussion of business’ contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has tended to focus on core business and community investment. Recently, businesses have been taking stands of societal issues - sometimes with a mixed response. Can advocacy partnerships between business and NGOs offer a way forward?
20th Jun 19 / 15:00 BST / 10:00 EDT

EVENT: BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY OXFORD 2019
Our annual flagship event at Said Business School, University of Oxford, will this year focus on how to embed purpose authentically within business. There is a clear and deepening frustration amongst some with the rhetoric of “purpose”. For those of us who believe in the power of business to do good, this is an opportunity for some honest self-reflection. This one-day event will combine inspiring plenaries with practical deep-dive knowledge zones focused on: partnerships, women’s economic empowerment, corporate social innovation, responsible supply chains, and purpose.
11th Jul 19 / Said Business School

ONLINE DISCUSSION: HOW CAN WE EMBED PURPOSE AUTHENTICALLY WITHIN BUSINESS?
To coincide with Business Fights Poverty Oxford 2019, we will host an all-day online discussion to explore the themes and priorities around business and purpose.
11th Jul 19 / ALL DAY
AT BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY, WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF PURPOSEFUL COLLABORATION.

WE HELP COMPANIES AND THEIR PARTNERS ACCESS THE INSIGHTS AND RELATIONSHIPS THEY NEED TO UNLOCK NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL IMPACT.

businessfightspoverty.org