



BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY

TOGETHER FOR 2025

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We deeply appreciate our community's contributions to [Together for 2025](#), our annual start-of-year Community Forum. Special thanks go out to each contributor, whose names appear in [this list](#). Their shared links and resources are compiled at the end of this paper.

In a time of global flux, the imperative for businesses to act as stabilising, supportive forces for good has never been clearer, whether in response to conflict, climate change or polarisation. Yet the rationale for businesses to invest in and address social issues is being questioned.

This paper summarises the priorities and recommended actions drawn from the Business Fights Poverty community. Contributors from diverse sectors, regions and circumstances offered their expertise, experience and insights, and this paper weaves their perspectives together.

Over 200 members of the Business Fights Poverty community joined the event, contributing 334 comments and reaching an audience of 1,200 to date. Our goal was to harness collective wisdom and address the following questions:

- ***Which priorities and actions should businesses pursue in 2025 to maximise their social and environmental impact?***

- ***What are the most significant challenges the social impact community will likely face in 2025, and how might we overcome them?***

We extend our gratitude to all participants for their contributions. Below is a high-level summary of the key insights.

ACTION POINTS BY KEY ISSUE

1. BUILD THE BUSINESS CASE & ROI FOR BUSINESS ACTION ON SOCIAL IMPACT

Business practices that address social challenges enhance brand reputation, deepen customer loyalty, and strengthen long-term resilience. The case for this continues in 2025, with recommendations including:

- **Strengthen impact measurement:** Develop robust frameworks to capture the full return on investment (ROI) of social impact initiatives, encompassing metrics such as employee engagement, brand equity and long-term operational resilience.
- **Embed social goals into core operations:** Ensure social impact activities are aligned to, and embedded into, business budgets, targets and incentives. Ensure that short-term gains do not undermine long-term commitments.
- **Communicate compelling narratives:** Showcase evidence of how social activities drive profitability and stakeholder loyalty, positioning social responsibility as a strategic advantage rather than a peripheral expense.

2. CREATE SAFE SPACES FOR BUSINESS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLICY DIALOGUES

When businesses, civil society groups and policymakers engage in constructive conversations, they build mutual understanding, reduce silos and spark collective action. These safe spaces enable candid discussions, foster empathy and ensure social and environmental challenges are addressed holistically. Recommended actions include:

- **Facilitate multi-sector forums:** Invest in platforms where businesses, civil society and policymakers can exchange insights, address potential conflicts (e.g., diversity and inclusion pushback), and co-create solutions.
- **Champion inclusive leadership:** Ensure leadership teams represent diverse perspectives, fostering an environment where complex issues – such as migration,

displacement and emerging regulations – can be tackled collaboratively.

- **Prepare for new regulations:** Anticipate policy developments (e.g., the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive) by conducting regular compliance reviews and stakeholder consultations to minimise risk and enhance shared value.

3. JOIN TOGETHER CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL ACTIONS

Proactive climate and environmental action, linked with inclusive social strategies, bolsters resilience and promotes equitable outcomes. By integrating sustainability goals with community needs, businesses can mitigate risks and create lasting, positive impact. Recommended actions include:

- **Adopt integrated strategies:** Recognise that environmental and social impacts are interlinked. Commit to regenerative processes that address climate change whilst advancing equitable opportunities for affected communities.
- **Support systemic change:** Invest in holistic solutions that tackle root causes of interconnected challenges – such as resource scarcity, social inequality and supply chain vulnerabilities – rather than treating them in isolation.
- **Monitor and disclose impacts:** Implement transparent reporting on both climate and social performance, moving beyond carbon metrics to include community engagement, livelihoods and human rights.

4. DESIGN FOR LOCAL ACTION WITH GLOBAL SUPPORT

By bridging local expertise with global resources, businesses help foster inclusive growth and take more context-relevant, and therefore more effective, action. A bottom-up approach strengthens credibility, resilience, and adaptability as solutions scale across different regions. Recommended actions for 2025 include:

- **Empower local voices:** Design community-led impact programmes that draw on grassroots expertise and

ensure that those closest to the issues shape strategic decision-making.

- **Strengthen value chain collaboration:** Conduct supply chain mapping to identify social and environmental risks, then partner with local suppliers and organisations to co-design solutions that uplift livelihoods and protect ecosystems.
- **Scale successful models internationally:** Adapt proven local initiatives for broader implementation, ensuring cultural and social nuances remain respected and integrated.

5. ADDRESS DIGITAL INCLUSION & ONLINE GOVERNANCE

Access to digital tools and online services is increasingly essential for social and economic participation. Ensuring everyone benefits from technology boosts productivity, expands opportunity and reduces inequality. But with rapid evolution comes rapidly emerging risks, uncertainty and the risk of leaving people behind. Experts recommend that businesses:

- **Promote equitable access:** Close digital divides by partnering with technology providers, governments and NGOs to expand internet connectivity, digital literacy and device availability.
- **Address online safety and governance:** Engage in policy discussions to safeguard users from digital threats and misinformation, recognising that business-led efforts can help shape responsible technology standards.
- **Upskill workforces and communities:** Invest in digital training for employees and local residents, enabling them to participate in the evolving global economy and enhance business performance.

6. EMBED LIVING WAGES FOR WORKERS & VALUE CHAINS

Paying living wages supports workers' well-being, strengthens communities and underpins sustainable supply chains.

When employees are fairly compensated, businesses reap the rewards of higher productivity, reduced turnover and enhanced reputation. Paying living wages requires a step change across business sectors. Recommendations to take action in 2025 include:

- **Adopt fair wage frameworks:** Collaborate with industry peers to establish transparent living wage standards across all tiers of supply chains, ensuring workers can support their families and communities.
- **Build resilient labour practices:** Incorporate living wage commitments into supplier contracts and internal policies, recognising that fair pay reduces turnover, enhances morale and strengthens business resilience and reputation.
- **Engage stakeholders on wage policies:** Involve employees, trade unions and local organisations in discussions around wage structures to foster trust and shared accountability.

7. BE AWARE OF MIGRATION AS A BUSINESS ISSUE

Rates of migration have more than doubled since 1990.¹ Businesses that embrace inclusive hiring and support migrant workers help cultivate social cohesion and tap into a broader pool of skills and experiences. By promoting fair treatment and integration, companies foster trust, loyalty and mutual benefit for both employees and communities. Actions for 2025 include:

- **Develop inclusive hiring policies:** Offer opportunities and tailored support for displaced people, recognising the valuable skills and diverse perspectives they bring.
- **Collaborate for systemic support:** Work with governments, NGOs and other businesses to address border concerns and ensure adequate care for migrant workers and their families.

Mitigate risks in supply chains: Conduct due diligence to identify and mitigate potential labour exploitation, human trafficking or other unethical practices affecting migrants.

¹ IOM, UN Migration, World Migration Report 2024: <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/msite/wmr-2024-interactive/#:~:text=The%20current%20global%20estimate%20is,over%20the%20past%20five%20decades.>

PARTICIPANTS' CALL TO ACTION

The threats of conflict, climate change and polarisation underscore the need for enterprises to stand as anchors of stability and positive influence. By integrating social impact into core operations, budgets and incentives, organisations can address short-term risks and foster long-term resilience. The time has come to measure what matters, shifting from viewing social impact as a peripheral cost to seeing it as a strategic investment that drives innovation and

builds trust. Collaboration is key: safe spaces for dialogue, inclusive partnerships and shared learning will propel real and lasting change.

Participants at Together for 2025 called for businesses to rise above short-termism, champion fair wages, promote digital inclusion and create livelihoods that respect people and planet.

This is the year to act boldly, unite diverse voices and deliver lasting, meaningful impact that truly counts.

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