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Collaboration always allows us to take on things we cannot dream of undertaking without support; to reach for things we cannot accomplish on our own. Given the scale of the challenges unfolding before us, how do we move the needle forward together, with greater urgency – and more efficiency – than ever before?

To approach collaboration constructively in the current climate of uncertainty and division, we must be brave. We need to circumvent the backgrounds and perspectives that may divide us and forge a commitment to work together toward achieving a common goal.

Collaboration around complex social inefficiencies is not always straightforward, however. Complex issues can be compounded by the intense scrutiny and public commentary social media has created. And yet, the collective determination of business to deliver powerful contributions towards the SDGs is routinely demonstrated through the work of the Business Fights Poverty 23,000-strong community of professionals.

Many of you reading this Magazine already partner with us, and will be familiar with our three-step approach to collaboration:

With thanks to our Supporters
• to **convene** the best, most passionate people we can find across our network and beyond around a burning question, or the Challenge, as we call it,
• to work together in an agile way to **co-create** a solution – or at least take a tangible step towards a solution, and
• to **communicate** actionable learnings and insights.

Inside this issue, you will find examples of our methodology at work – starting with a gender-focused Challenge. We have collaborated with the International Finance Corporation, CARE International, Anglo American and Primark, to launch a new report “Tackling Gender Based Violence at Work” (pg. 20). Arriving at a poignant moment in history – the report follows the ratification of the new International Labour Organisation convention to eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work1.

Evidence shows that post #MeToo, tensions have heightened2 between men and women, and much of the focus has been on empowering women to speak out. If we are to bridge the gender divide and reach SDG 53, however, we must build stronger links between the sexes and men must be a part of the conversation. Together with AB InBev, Stanford University’s VMware Women’s Leadership Innovation Lab and CARE, this Challenge will focus on how we can engage men as allies in the journey towards gender equality (pg. 17).

And where better to start than to deep dive into what’s working? HeForShe⁴, a UN Women initiative, is a global solidarity movement that has seen over two million men in every country around the world make a commitment to push the gender equality agenda further. We interviewed the Global Head, Elizabeth Nyamayaro, to find out more.

Modern slavery is another issue requiring urgent action that can be tackled through collaboration and this issue also highlights a brand new Challenge, bringing Nestlé together with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), to evaluate technology as a potential tool for tackling modern slavery in global supply chains. Collaboration in this case is about learning from the examples of technology applied to deepen worker engagement across different sectors and empowering partners to apply their varied experience in an integrated way to address modern slavery (pg. 23).

I hope you are as inspired by the features as I was, and for those of you who are not yet partnering with us, let’s have a conversation. Whether our approach to collaboration is a good fit for your organisation or not, we still welcome your connection. We genuinely want to learn. After all collaboration is more of an art than a science, and we must share the task working together to make change happen.

**anna@businessfightspoverty.org**

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4 HeForShe. Retrieved from https://www.heforshe.org/en
BE AUTHENTIC ABOUT PURPOSE: FROM WORDS TO ACTION

RECENTLY, A GROUP OF 181 CEOs, COLLECTIVELY REPRESENTING OVER 15 MILLION EMPLOYEES AND MORE THAN $7 TRILLION IN ANNUAL REVENUES, DECLARED THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER PUTTING SHAREHOLDERS BEFORE EVERYONE ELSE. HOW CAN WORDS BE TURNED INTO ACTION?

Recently, a group of 181 CEOs, collectively representing over 15 million employees and more than $7 trillion in annual revenues, declared that they are no longer putting shareholders before everyone else. The “Statement of Purpose of a Corporation”, issued by the Business Roundtable, is a bold re-imagining of the principles of corporate governance that they have issued several times since 1978 and that have until now “endorsed principles of shareholder primacy – that corporations exist principally to serve shareholders”.

One could reasonably ask why it took so long. I vividly remember listening to Anita Roddick, the charismatic founder of The Body Shop, giving a passionate speech back in the late 1990s about the power of purpose. Others have blazed a trail too, including most obviously Paul Polman, the former Unilever CEO, and Yvon Chouinard, Founder of Patagonia.

Perhaps, the real significance of the Business Roundtable statement is that we are finally moving along the equivalent of Everett Roger’s “diffusion of innovations” curve: from innovators to early adopters, to early majority, to late majority, and eventually to laggards. Leaving aside where one would place the individual signatory companies, Everett’s core idea – that innovation must be widely adopted in order to self-sustain – means that the statement deserves a warm welcome.

Purpose needs to be made real – and embedded authentically across the business. Otherwise, companies are rightly open to criticisms of purpose wash.

2 Business Roundtable, (n.a.) Retrieved from https://www.businessroundtable.org/
The bigger question about the statement is about whether and how it will be translated into action. In a counter-statement⁴, 33 CEOs of B Corporations, a movement of companies certified against social, environmental and government standards, called on the Business Roundtable CEOs to put their words into action by adopting the benefit corporation governance model that requires boards of directors to balance profit and purpose.

As a B Corp, ourselves, we know that this model provides a powerful and practical tool for any business to embed purpose, and more importantly, to be constantly challenged and inspired to continually improve. Recently, B Corp announced the 2019 Best for the World Honorees⁵. I’m proud to say that Business Fights Poverty was among them, recognised in the Workers category (I have previously outlined⁶ our belief in the importance of empowering our team through fully flexible working).

The wider point is that purpose needs to be made real – and embedded authentically across the business. Otherwise, companies are rightly open to criticisms of purpose wash. In her article⁷ reflecting on the Business Roundtable’s statement, Irit Tamir, Director of Oxfam America’s Private Sector Department, captures the wider sentiment, arguing that any new commitments “must be more than words on paper.

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This was a central theme of our recent event, Business Fights Poverty Oxford 2019 (you can watch the videos\(^8\) and read the online discussion about “saving purpose from purpose wash”\(^9\), and summary of the discussion\(^10\)). Embedding purpose is also the focus of a Challenge we are running with the support of GSK, Unilever and Visa. We are exploring how businesses can embed purpose, and initially identified Five Pillars\(^11\) to build authentic purpose within organisations.

Based on our conversations and research to date, we have decided to zoom in on the key role that investors can play. Both investors and companies are putting an increased emphasis on purpose, yet the conversations all too often are happening in separate bubbles. Through our work we want to better understand the approaches being taken to embed purpose into companies, by both companies and investors, and to identify areas for collaboration. We would love to hear your thoughts and ideas. To find out more and get involved, please sign up on the Challenge page.\(^{12}\).

The recent wave of interest in purpose is to be welcomed. But we must take the opportunity to genuinely understand how companies can make this real.

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

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8 Business Fights Poverty videos (n.a.) Retrieved from https://businessfightspoverty.org/video/


10 https://businessfightspoverty.org/articles/how-can-we-save-purpose-from-purpose-wash-2/


12 Find out more and join the Challenge at: https://businessfightspoverty.org/articles/challenges/how-can-we-embed-purpose-authentically-into-business/
THE ROLE BANKS CAN PLAY IN ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A BANK MAKES A MOVE TOWARDS ACHIEVING GREATER GENDER PARITY INTERNALLY, COMBINED WITH A RAZOR-SHARP FOCUS ON THE AMBITIONS SET OUT IN SDG 5? LEARN MORE IN A CONVERSATION WITH LAURA HEMRIKA, GLOBAL HEAD, CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP & FOUNDATIONS AND PATSY DOERR, GLOBAL HEAD OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, CREDIT SUISSE.

BFP: Credit Suisse is this year’s host of Business Fights Poverty flagship event at UNGA in New York – could you tell us a little more about why a bank like Credit Suisse supports these kinds of initiatives?

PD: At Credit Suisse, we believe that it is in the interest of both our organisation and our clients for us to develop and support measures that contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive economy. Since the introduction of the SDGs by the UN, we have been pursuing activities designed to contribute to the realisation of the goals in our role as a global financial institution, as a financial intermediary and employer, and through corporate citizenship.

LH: Our global initiatives in the areas of financial inclusion and education are designed to promote inclusive growth and social development through partnerships with organisations across different sectors of society. For example, in the area of financial inclusion, investments are designed to provide economically disadvantaged people with access to financial services. The combination of financial support from Credit Suisse and skills-based volunteering by our employees allows our partners to generate greater impact.

BFP: Gender is a big focus for Credit Suisse and SDG 5 sets out an aim for gender equality – can you share some more on this?

PD: Credit Suisse’s gender equality – and more broadly, our diversity and inclusion agenda – is a key focus area both internally as well as in our social impact programmes. For example, our Real Returns program for women provides talented and experienced professionals (not necessarily from the finance sector) who have taken an extended career break, an opportunity to transition back into the workplace through a structured 6-month programme. By the end of 2018, the programme had seen the participation of 295 professionals in 17 classes since its launch in 2014, and over 60% of participants obtained a permanent position at Credit Suisse.

At Credit Suisse, we believe that it is in the interest of both our organisation and our clients for us to develop and support measures that contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive economy.
Moreover, Credit Suisse signed\(^1\) the Women in Finance Charter\(^2\) in June 2016 – a pledge to support the progression of women into senior roles across our UK legal entities. We have also established regional development and mentoring programmes, specifically targeting the development of female talent, e.g., the Switzerland Mentoring Advisory Group. Since its launch in 2009, more than 1,000 employees have participated.

More than 750 participants have benefitted from our ‘childcare leave’ coaching in all regions to provide guidance on planning for an upcoming parental leave and subsequent return to work, and to increase retention of female employees after their maternity leave.

**LH:** And we address female empowerment across the globe through our corporate citizenship programmes. One billion women are outside the formal financial system today. Funded by the Credit Suisse Foundation, our Financial Inclusion Initiative\(^3\) aims to strengthen our partner organisations’ ability to serve the diverse financial needs at the base of the pyramid, such as our partnership with Women’s World Banking (WWB). We support their Leadership & Diversity for Innovation Program (a curriculum to deliver the tools and skills women need to advance their careers, build greater diversity for their institutions, and enhance their ability to serve the women’s market).

Our Financial Education for Girls Initiative\(^4\), also funded by the Foundation, aims to increase girls’ financial capability and awareness of their social and economic rights, and to help girls build better futures for themselves. Our not for profit partners deliver this program in schools alongside a broader life skills curriculum, focusing in countries and locations where girls and young women are particularly disadvantaged because of their gender, socio-economic background and cultural environment. Girls are also encouraged to start up small enterprises that will equip them with useful experience for their future livelihoods\(^5\).

**BFP:** There is a lot of talk about the importance of embedding social impact firmly into business purpose – what does this mean to Credit Suisse?

**PD:** We believe that a positive impact on society and the environment can be achieved without sacrificing financial returns. We have been active in the sustainable investment space for over 16 years, and continue to broaden our sustainable investment offering and align it more closely with the SDGs.

**LH:** Increasingly, our clients look for opportunities to invest in companies and initiatives that are mindful of environmental, social and governance factors, seeing a vast transfer of wealth shift from one generation to another, a generation that is far more purpose-centric in its investment behaviours.

In our role as a fiduciary of our clients’ capital, and as a global citizen, we are working to close the gaps identified by the UN SDGs. We do this by partnering with like-minded private, public and non-governmental organisations and with a dedicated team of product specialists working to innovate and deliver sustainable products and services across asset classes and themes.

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BANKING
THE UNBANKED

BE INSPIRED BY BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY NYC KEYNOTE SPEAKER, NAUReEN HYAT, AS SHE TELLS US ABOUT TEZ FINANCIAL SERVICES, A VISA EVERYWHERE INITIATIVE AWARD-WINNING TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION, WHICH IS POSITIONED TO BRIDGE THE GAP TOWARDS THE FINANCIAL INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN PAKISTAN.

‘DREAMS ARE TOO EXPENSIVE – WE CANNOT AFFORD TO DREAM’

Khalida Bibi, a female home-based worker, expressed her despair during one of our customer surveys to assess the needs of lower- and middle-income individuals in rural Pakistan. Khalida is a 45-year-old, mother of three who runs a small home-based embroidery business, which provides an inconsistent income stream to support her family. Her husband is a factory worker, and his daily wage barely covers their expenses.

FINANCIAL EXCLUSION: AN UNBRIDGED GAP

My experiences of working on the ground in the microfinance sector have shown me what poverty means first-hand; from compromised health to a lack of opportunities for education and no means to fund emergencies, which can result in debt traps, keeping families stuck in the poverty cycle for generations. Field interviews with female borrowers revealed education fees and reducing the number and quality of meals were amongst the first expenses to be cut back on during times of financial difficulty.

Like Khalida and her husband, there are over 100 million people in Pakistan without access to basic financial services. These are people living on the edge – where minute fluctuations in cash flows could prevent them from meeting their day-to-day needs. And yet, as little as $10 could help them cope in times of financial difficulties and pay for basics including food, medicine and school fees.

Most unbanked and under-banked people in Pakistan use a variety of informal instruments to manage their financial needs, often at the risk of fraud, loss or depreciation. This segment continues to be under-served by conventional financial institutions owing to lack of credit histories, suitable collaterals, high operating costs and weak risk rating tools. On the contrary, the digital landscape varies significantly whereby Pakistan has one of the highest teledensities (the number of telephone connections per 100 people in an area) in the region, supplemented by high smartphone penetration and 3G/4G coverage across most parts of the country.
Towards a Solution: Financial Inclusion

“Entrenched poverty and prejudice, and vast gulfs between wealth and destitution, can undermine the fabric of societies and lead to instability. Where poverty holds sway anywhere, people are held back everywhere. Lives disfigured by poverty are cruel, mean and, often, short. Our goal must be a world of dignity, opportunity and well-being, where no one is left behind.”

– Ban Ki-Moon
Former UN Secretary General

Financial inclusion is about human development and empowerment. It is evident that financial inclusion is a vital pillar for the achievement of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a direct impact on poverty, health, education and gender equality.

We believe that the most sustainable mechanism to alleviate poverty is economic empowerment. If meaningful work is to happen towards this goal, greater income-generating opportunities must be created, as well as cost-effective, sustainable access to financial services.

Tez – A Full Stack Digital Bank

Tez Financial Services (Tez) is the first fully digital financial institution in Pakistan, providing frictionless financial service access via a smartphone application. At the heart of Tez lies Artificial Intelligence, used for credit underwriting, churn reduction and optimising customer experience. As the name implies in Urdu, Tez provides “swift” access to financial services, fulfilling customer needs in a matter of minutes at the click of a button. Tez aims to reduce the financial vulnerability of the masses through comprehensive financial services including credit, savings, insurance and investments.

Currently, women in Pakistan are largely excluded from the formal financial system; only 7% of adult females have a formal bank account, compared to 34% of males. Mobility and social interaction limitations can restrict women’s access to bricks and mortar financial services. Tez aims to enhance the financial inclusion of women by providing them with access to financial services and enabling them to conduct digital financial transactions from their homes. Remarkable impact has been observed in the decisions women make as a result of having access to a bank account: they invest in businesses and use the proceeds to invest in their households.

In just 15 months, Tez has approved over 100,000 loans, across 142 cities. With the
support of the Visa Everywhere Initiative – not only is Tez being provided with global visibility, but it has also allowed us to tap into the connectivity and numerous partners at Visa. The prize money from this Challenge will support us in our development efforts to build new financial products and functionalities for the masses, thereby serving their financial needs and contributing to the wider cause of financial inclusion.

Our ambition is to serve five million customers within the next three years. We aim to create financial identities for the unbanked masses so that they can be empowered to improve their quality of lives, women can have the financial freedom to build and grow small businesses, and communities can be made inclusive and have the power to build their futures.

Naureen Hyat, Co-Founder and Business Head, Tez Financial Services and Visa Everywhere Initiative: Fintech Challenge Winner

We aim to create financial identities for the unbanked masses so that they can be empowered to improve their quality of lives.

EDITOR’S NOTE

The Visa Everywhere Initiative is a competition calling on entrepreneurs to submit innovative and impactful solutions to solve specific challenges. Its Women’s Global Edition for the first time specifically celebrates the work of women entrepreneurs around the world, inviting entries in two categories: Fintech and Social Impact. The Fintech Challenge sought applicants who leveraged their companies’ unique ability to solve or transform consumer and/or commercial payment experiences locally, regionally or globally. The overall competition received nearly 1,300 entries from around the world, of which six Fintech Challenge applicants were selected as Regional Finalists, and Naureen Hyat emerged the winner. Recently, Tez was also recognised as a winner of the first Inclusive Fintech 50 – a competition by the Metlife Foundation, Visa Inc., Accion Venture Lab and the International Finance Corporation to help early-stage fintech companies attract capital and resources to benefit the world’s three billion financially underserved people.


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.

**HANNAH GREEN**
Director of Corporate Responsibility, GSK

During this podcast, Hannah explores the importance of business purpose to GSK; how it helps to bring the business together, drive strategy and create focus. Hannah also talks about why ensuring authenticity behind business purpose is essential.

**HAMZAH SARWAR**
Global Insight Lead, RB Health

Hamzah highlights four key areas that intrapreneurship at a system level can do: turns people into burning advocates of your business purpose; empowers people to own their decision making; initiates pipelines of innovation from all corners of a business; and develops people’s talent, maximising their potential.

**JOAN BOHAN**
Executive Finance Director and Founder of Dysnie Intrapreneur Venture at The Walt Disney Company

The conversation explores how a purpose-led company, one inspirational senior leader’s talk and an intrapreneur challenge competition unlocked Joan’s nascent power to innovate and launch an entire new business proposition for the company.
INVITING MEN TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

THE #HEFORSHE MOVEMENT

Engaging men as allies can be a powerful accelerator to help companies, governments and institutions achieve gender equality. Elizabeth Nyamayaro takes us behind the scenes of how UN Women built a worldwide network of men who are championing SDG 5 – the gender equality goal.

The case for gender equality is clear with estimates that £28 trillion could be added to the global economy if women participated equally. Yet according to recent reports, no country is expected to achieve full gender equality by 2030¹. Our ongoing Business Fights Poverty Challenge with AB InBev, CARE and Stanford University’s VMWare Women’s Leadership Innovation Lab suggests that engaging men as allies to advance gender equality is key to achieving lasting change.

As part of the Challenge, we interviewed Elizabeth Nyamayaro, Global Head, HeForShe² to find out how UN Women has enrolled more than two million men in every country in the world to pledge their commitment to gender equality, as well as involving companies, governments and institutions in this unprecedented global movement.

² HeForShe. Retrieved from https://www.heforshe.org/en

WHY AND HOW DID UN WOMEN LAUNCH #HEFORSHE?

‘Back in 2014, when we were trying to understand why gender equality was stalling, we realised that for too long men have been seen as part of the problem. It was time that they became part of the solution. After all, we cannot achieve societal change if one half of the population is not included’.

Early on in her role, Elizabeth identified several reasons why men were not engaging, including fear and misperceptions, and she quickly noticed that the dialogue had to change. HeForShe was therefore framed positively and aimed to bring men into the conversation in an inclusive way. Elizabeth also realised
that it was essential to enable people to take action through simple and clear commitments. It turned out that her intuition was correct. The positive language mobilised people and created a sense of solidarity between men and women.

WHAT HAPPENS IF AN INDIVIDUAL OR COMPANY PLEDGE TO SUPPORT HEFORSHE?

HeForShe is about building awareness of the individual and organisational benefits of gender equality. To help people engage at an individual level, HeForShe and PwC developed an interactive 35-minute online course, ‘Building Gender IQ’, on the benefits of gender equality and why it matters. Individuals and organisations are encouraged to make commitments, including, for example: ‘I commit to reviewing our hiring practices to make sure that there is no gender bias in how we advertise for and hire new staff’. Members of the Corporate IMPACT group have each made three bold commitments towards improving gender equality in their organisations, e.g. Barclays have committed to reach 2.5 million women with financial services, increase the senior leadership of women by a percentage point each year, and embed gender equality across the culture, policies and processes of the organisation.

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE KEY LESSONS LEARNT WHEN IT COMES TO EFFECTIVELY ENGAGING MEN?

Elizabeth highlighted two things in particular. Firstly, ‘In order to be truly transformational, change needs to be bottom-up and top-down. While it is crucial for world leaders and CEOs to embody the message, it is also important to get everyone involved’. Social movements are successful if people feel they belong to a tribe. This was exemplified in a map UN Women posted on its website for men to demonstrate their commitment in their communities. They could see how they were part of a growing movement of men standing up for gender equality.

Secondly, Elizabeth emphasised the power of partnership. UN Women quickly realised that HeForShe had to build on the many years of work undertaken by women’s rights activists and other partners if it was to be effective. UN Women is also adamant that they can’t solve gender equality issues alone and work closely with companies, governments and other institutions to advise on their gender strategies. Elizabeth feels that UN Women’s true value proposition to companies is its access to a large network of local NGOs and leading experts on gender equality that can advise the private sector on implementation and delivery.

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4 This includes the CEOs of Barclays, Koc Holding, Unilever, Accor, Electronic Arts, Vodafone, PwC, McKinsey, Schneider Electric. https://www.heforshe.org/en/impact
CAN YOU GIVE US SOME EXAMPLES OF WHERE HEFORSHE HAS HAD AN IMPACT?

Elizabeth feels that the most striking example is perhaps Malawi, which outlawed child marriage within 15 months of making its commitment to HeForShe, coupled with an enormous amount of awareness and activity at the local level which effectively eradicated child marriage in communities. There have also been some great examples from the private sector. PwC went from 18% female representation on their Global Leadership Team to 47% in just 15 months (by implementing measures such as executive sponsorship, leadership commitment and accountability, data-driven decision making, strategic implementation and continuous monitoring).

WHAT TOOLS HAS HEFORSHE CREATED THAT COULD HELP COMPANIES TAKE ACTION?

Elizabeth highlighted two key resources available on the HeForShe website:

- The ‘Proven Solutions: Achieving Parity at Global Leadership’ report, which provides a framework based on the experience of PwC.⁵
- The Barbershop Toolkit (born out of the idea that the barbershop is the only place men really open up and developed by the Government of Iceland as a HeForShe national commitment), which provides men within organisations with the tools to address gender inequality and become agents of change.⁶

Elizabeth Nyamayaro

is a political scientist and senior advisor to Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director for UN Women. Nyamayaro is the head of HeForShe, a movement founded by UN Women to empower all humans, especially men and boys, to have a voice and take action to achieve gender equality in their own lifetime. In the past two decades, Nyamayaro has held positions at UNAIDS, the World Health Organization, the World Bank and Merck.

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Gender-based violence affects employees’ physical and mental health and well-being, leading to stress, anxiety, loss of self-esteem and motivation. Often women are forced to leave their jobs. It contributes to the gender pay gap and seriously affects women’s opportunities for advancement and career progression. Women usually bear the brunt of gender-based violence, although others are at risk, including men and members of the LGBTQI community.

The costs of GBV are high, with estimates totalling $1.5 trillion, the equivalent of 2% of global GDP. The impacts of inaction are significant. For example, in one study in Papua New Guinea, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) estimated that staff lost 11 workdays per year to GBV, including two days to presenteeism, five to absenteeism and four to assisting other GBV survivors. Staff time alone cost companies between 3% and 9% of payroll.

The #MeToo movement has shown there is an unprecedented demand for change, including from employees and from some business leaders across the world. Companies are beginning to tackle GBV, but many others must now follow.

One of the barriers to action has arguably been uncertainty – there is a nervousness about ‘what to do’ about such a complex problem. With this in mind, Anglo American, CARE, IFC and Primark came together to undertake a nine-month Business Fights Poverty Challenge to better assist other GBV survivors.

**HOW COMPANIES CAN TACKLE GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

Gender-based violence affects employees’ physical and mental health and well-being, leading to stress, anxiety, loss of self-esteem and motivation.
understand how business can most effectively address GBV.

The resultant toolkit aims to help business take action. It is timely and will help companies prepare for the implementation of the new International Labour Organisation convention on violence and harassment\(^5\). This was agreed in June 2019 and sets out the first globally recognised standards for addressing violence and harassment, which will level the playing field and oblige action and accountability by governments and employers. One of the most significant implications of the Convention is that it will require a more comprehensive response from companies.

By taking the actions described in this toolkit, companies will also be contributing to the achievement of the ambitious internationally agreed UN targets for people and planet, particularly Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 on gender equality, and 8 on decent work and inclusive growth. It will also prepare those engaged in development and humanitarian operations, including private sector suppliers, to adhere to the new (July 2019) OECD DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment\(^6\).

Our toolkit provides a 5 Step Framework for action, supplemented with tips and case studies to unearth promising practices. Our 5 Step Framework outlines how companies can comprehensively tackle violence and harassment at work:

1. Prevent violence and harassment by identifying potential risks.
2. Commit to gender equality and diversity across the workplace.
3. Protect employees with supportive policies and procedures.
4. Collaborate and campaign beyond the immediate workplace.
5. Be accountable and monitor action.

We have also included a detailed diagnostic tool, developed by Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), to help guide companies to take an in-depth look at their policies, procedures and operations. This includes across their value chains.

The report includes case studies that illustrate how companies are starting to innovate against these 5 steps. They include Anglo American, Kering Group, Vodafone, Diageo, Avon and Unilever, as well as IFC and CARE.

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FOR EXAMPLE:

Vodafone Group research in partnership with Opinium in 2019 revealed that one in three working adults (37%) had experienced domestic abuse in some form, which had significantly impacted their career. Vodafone responded by agreeing to a policy of 10 days paid ‘safe leave’ across its 26 markets for any staff member experiencing domestic violence and abuse. The policy also makes provision for HR and line manager training to identify and assist those experiencing abuse. One of the key reasons that enabled the policy was the longstanding organisational commitment to gender equality, building on a vision to make Vodafone the ‘world’s best employer for women by 2025’. This vision had already led to the establishment of a global maternity policy with a minimum of 16 weeks leave, regardless of the market (2015), and their ReConnect programme to recruit 1,000 people back to work following career breaks (2017).

Three clear insights emerged from our Challenge into how business can address GBV:

• **Diverse and inclusive workplaces** are the foundation stone for effectively tackling GBV – and this is something that all businesses, whether big or small, can start to work towards.

• **A new spirit of openness and trust** amongst business is required. Taking the steps outlined in this report will (initially) lead to an increasing number of staff reporting incidences, or using training and hotlines. We must collectively recognise this as a positive step towards improved practice, and a far better outcome than losing members of the workforce or accepting reduced productivity, which is what inaction will continue to bring.

• **Developing more open means of reporting** on the success or failure of approaches is critical, as many of our case studies reveal a lack of ability to track real impacts.

We sincerely hope that this toolkit for action will help us move forward together. GBV is not an easy subject to tackle, but it can be done. Our toolkit illustrates that there are many actions businesses can take even if they are at the very start of this journey. The results will benefit overall performance, productivity and retention. And, those experiencing GBV deserve nothing less.

To read the toolkit in full and access all the case studies and the BSR diagnostic, click on this link.

Alice Allan, Challenge Director, Business Fights Poverty
MODERN SLAVERY IN SUPPLY CHAINS: A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Over 40 million people are in modern slavery. It is a crime affecting all countries, yet it is often hidden and difficult to measure. In a new Business Fights Poverty Challenge with Nestlé, and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), we are setting out to explore how technology can help tackle modern slavery particularly through worker engagement.

The issue has rapidly gained attention in recent years, and governments have responded with legislation to strengthen companies’ obligations. However, the Global Slavery Index shows that over US$354 billion worth of products at risk of modern slavery are being imported into G20 countries annually.

Some 62% of global business leaders surveyed in 2016 by Thomson Reuters said they conduct due diligence only on the first tier of their third-party relationships. Modern slavery can be a difficult problem to track - and even harder to eradicate - in businesses further down the supply chain, such as small farms, palm oil plantations, or single-operator boats supplying seafood.

A new Challenge project with Nestlé, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and Business Fights Poverty is exploring the role of technology in tackling this problem, with a particular focus on the supply chains of consumer goods companies. We are describing recent examples of technology being applied in this way and aim to share actionable insights from the best emerging practice. A mapping of technologies undertaken for the Tech Against Trafficking Initiative showed that, of the tools with publicly available information, only 11% were geared towards worker engagement. This is a niche we hope to expand.

Worker engagement is an essential starting point in overcoming the intractable nature of modern slavery in supply chains. As with other human rights issues in supply chains, such as child labour or workers’ health and safety, effective grievance-raising and remediation mechanisms are fundamental to empowering workers and eradicating problems. Mobile-based and wearable technology has proven successful in enabling greater understanding of workers’ experience. This may in turn help to strengthen formal systems for raising concerns, building trust and ensuring effective company responses to problems identified.

A ROLE FOR TECHNOLOGY

ELEVATE’s Laborlink® mobile platform is a good example of a two-way communication channel for workers to share their perspectives in real time. It gives companies greater visibility of workers’ experiences and viewpoints, and of the conditions in which they work. For example, Good World Solutions® uses workers’ own mobile phones with Laborlink to connect directly with workers in real time, aiming to use data to help create safe and respectful workplaces. They reach over a million workers around the world.

CARE International partnered with Laborlink to pilot the use of wearable technology® to uncover the reasons why thousands of garment factory workers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, were fainting on the job. Over 200 factory workers wore the devices continuously for two weeks, leading to information about their conditions within and beyond the factory.

These examples may require adaptation to help tackle modern slavery in supply chains. For example, in the Cambodia case, almost all the workers said they would undertake the programme again, but in situations where modern slavery is prevalent, workers may have no reason to believe that a potentially intrusive technology will be used in their own interests. Where an approach to worker engagement relies on using workers’ own mobile phones, the company would need to explore whether this condition excludes those most at risk of modern slavery.

UNCOVERING HIDDEN PROBLEMS

There are promising signs that such concerns can be overcome. Nestlé and its major seafood supplier Thai Union, for example, have partnered with Issara Institute to provide over 35,000 workers in their supply chains® with access to Issara’s independent multilingual migrant worker helpline. These include workers at processing sites, feed mills, fishmeal plants and on fishing vessels. Many migrant workers also use Issara’s Golden Dreams smartphone app, which enables them to voice their opinions and exchange views with each other about employers, as well as giving up-to-date information about workers’ legal rights.

Issara also works in migrant workers’ countries of origin. This is crucial: recruitment fee debt-bondage is a major component of modern slavery in supply chains.
chains. Once migrant workers reach an employer, they may well hide the fact that they had to pay recruitment fees for fear of being sent back. Recruitment processes and routes are not transparent, nor are they well understood. So, the contribution of applications such as Golden Dreams to raising workers’ awareness of their own rights and increasing transparency in recruitment processes may have far-reaching effects.

Increasing a company’s understanding of worker conditions, driven by perspectives from the workers themselves, lifts the cover of invisibility under which abuses are more likely to occur. And patterns in engagement data from workers who are not themselves victims of modern slavery might help to identify signals showing where there is a hidden problem.

These examples show potential for technology to contribute to the fight against modern slavery, in particular through creating closer, two-way connections between a company and the workers in its supply chain. This deeper engagement can lead to greater trust as workers see conditions improving in response to concerns raised. This builds workers’ confidence to raise more sensitive issues, including those relating to modern slavery. New partnerships will be needed to take this further, such as formalising technology-enabled grievance-raising and remediation mechanisms. For more information on our Challenge, please join us via the Challenge website.¹⁰.

David Norman, Challenge Director, Business Fights Poverty

¹⁰  https://snipbfp.org/2khSvbR
HOW CAN WE SAVE PURPOSE FROM PURPOSE-WASH?

This year, Business in the Community\(^1\) reported that companies are in danger of purpose-wash. Whilst 86% of the companies surveyed had a statement of purpose, 83% had not considered its implications for their departments or team targets. This implementation gap threatens to undermine the potential of business purpose as a force for good.

The common ground between the critics and champions of purpose is the desire for authenticity\(^2\). Our Challenge on purpose\(^3\) asks how we can move beyond rhetoric to embed purpose meaningfully and consistently across business. We initially identified five pillars (Define, Do, Live, Say, Partner)\(^4\) to build authentic purpose within organisations, and sought the opinions of the Business Fights Poverty network to gain deeper insights into the problem.

This article draws from our online conversation\(^5\) on how we can save purpose from purpose-wash. The discussion deepened our understanding of the five pillars, and raised four themes which help businesses avoid the purpose-wash trap: Leadership; Profit; Sustainability; and Transparency.


3 How can we embed purpose authentically into business? (n.a.) Retrieved from https://businessfightspoverty.org/articles/challenges/how-can-we-embed-purpose-authentically-into-business/


COLLABORATIVE AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Authentic purpose is led from the top but owned by all employees. Leaders who are serious about authenticity define the company’s long-term purpose in consultation with employees and other stakeholders, and then allow this purpose to become the single most important criteria to evaluate all future business decisions. Leaders can harness the growing enthusiasm of employees for purposeful work to generate new ideas and initiatives, by ensuring that social intrapreneurs are given the time and support they need. The democratisation of company decision-making requires leaders to display a degree of humility, willingness to learn from employees, and to collaborate across all levels of the business, value chain and wider organisational networks. Accountability is also key - to achieve authenticity, employees must be empowered by the organisational culture to hold leaders to account.
Leadership on purpose requires a shift in mindset away from the ‘greed is good’ mentality of the 1980s and 1990s, to an acknowledgement of the interconnection between the finite nature of the planet’s resources, the well-being of people, and long-term business success. This is not always an easy shift for leaders to make, but there is help available for leaders who want to place Purpose at the heart of their operations. The Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership’s webinars on Purposeful Leadership are a good place to start, and business advisors and marketing consultants can work with senior leadership to leverage the commercial and organisational opportunities that follow from the mindset shift to a more inclusive, collaborative way of leading.

As the idea of purpose becomes more prevalent, the temptation is to loudly advertise purpose through brands and marketing activities as well as annual reports. In fact, leaders should be cautious to avoid falling into this purpose-wash trap. Pilar Pedrinelli from Unilever warns that companies should first make meaningful progress on four of our five pillars - Define, Do, Live, Partner - before focusing on Say. “Now that doesn’t mean everything should have already had significant results before you are getting to a Say. Sometimes it’s about taking other people with you on the journey; sometimes the Say is the Do (especially on advocacy). The important thing is that everything we do is an integral part of a long term plan.” As the Head of Social Impact at Visa remarked at our Oxford Conference, leaders must be honest with employees and other stakeholders, balancing the tension between short-term expectation and the long-term opportunity to create real transformation. Leaders’ failure to do so can result in allegations of purpose-washing, even where there is genuine commitment to purpose.

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PURPOSE IS THE PRIMARY GOAL, PROFIT IS A BY-PRODUCT

Some fear that becoming a purpose-led business could adversely affect profits. However, profit and purpose are not opposite ends of a spectrum; driving purpose whilst making profit is possible. At Unilever, brands with purpose grew 69% faster than the rest. Indeed, purpose may become essential to future profit as consumers become increasingly conscious of the social and environmental impacts of their purchases. Alan Jope, the company’s CEO, recently announced that “in the future, every Unilever brand will be a brand with purpose”.

Purpose led-businesses view profit not as an end in itself, but as a means to invest more resources in pursuit of purpose, their primary goal. They also ask “how right is our profit?” Gib Bulloch noted that “rather than profit maximising, a purpose-driven business will ‘optimise’ profit in balance with its mission and the needs of wider stakeholders.” This requires a change in investor expectations, transitioning to a focus on long-term gains rather than short-term share prices, and incentivising CEOs, Boards and employees in ways which reward positive impact on human well-being in addition to financial performance.

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6  Rewiring leadership: leading change for a sustainable economy (n.a.) Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership. Retrieved from https://www.cisli.cam.ac.uk/about/leadership-hub


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Transformational reform of business models is tough in the context of a system that rewards short term profit maximisation. Will Gardner suggests that businesses “need more hero examples of companies like Interface10 that are truly bold in changing their core model and value chain in pursuit of their mission.” Investors need to be involved in the conversation. According to Tasneem Mayet, businesses keen to engage investors on purpose should analyse and publically report “how purpose impacts your specific company’s financial performance (perhaps through materiality assessments or by linking sustainability goals such as the UN SDGs) through scenario analysis and stress testing”. Such reporting is often welcomed; mindsets are changing, particularly as millennials join the investor class.

DOING NO HARM: AUTHENTIC PURPOSE NEEDS SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability has an impact on how authentic a purpose appears; businesses cannot claim to have a social purpose if they deliver it in a way that harms people or the planet. However the two concepts are distinct, and easily confused. Both terms relate to an organisations’ social and environmental impact, and are connected to social justice ideals. Justine Harris highlights the common benefits: “They are both very powerful tools to build trust both internally and with external stakeholders. They can both provide a framework for ‘better’ decision making. And they can both define how a business can create value in the longer term in a way that takes account of global challenges and the need for businesses to make a contribution to wider society beyond profit (taxes and employment).”

Nevertheless, there are important differences. Whereas sustainability strategy focuses on specific areas of operational risk (for example supply chain, health and safety, environment), purpose is the organisation’s reason for being. Subsequently, purpose acts as a guiding star to motivate action and guide decision-making. In essence, purpose is the “Why” of an organisation, and Sustainability is part of the “How”.

Many organisations, including Vodafone Group PLC, are putting sustainability at the heart of their purpose framework. A recent round table defined Sustainable Purpose as the “meaningful, enduring reason for an organization to exist that provides solutions to global challenges, or benefits society, in a way that sustains the social and environmental systems we rely upon.” Ben Kellard further explains: “this [definition] expresses how purpose can drive the core business to create ongoing value across its wider network, in a way that contributes to a sustainable future.”

BOOSTING TRANSPARENCY THROUGH NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

As more and more businesses join up to the notion of purpose (at least in principle), tools and certifications which measure social impact become invaluable to distinguish the truly purpose-led organisations from those that are paying lip-service. Businesses can be transparent by publishing objectives, targets and KPIs in a purpose framework, so a business could measure progress, adjust and innovate. However, activities to measure impact must not detract from the real work of driving forward the organisation’s purpose in meaningful ways. Sally Jackson, Senior Vice President, Global Communications and CEO Office, GSK, explained at our Oxford Conference11 this year how company-wide objectives and KPIs for purpose are linked to individual employee goals, so that everyone can see how their day-to-day contribution matters. This approach has allowed GSK to stay focused on their Purpose whilst boosting employee engagement.

Transparency is one area in which cross-sector partnerships between business, NGOs and government are essential. Technology such as that being developed by PositiveBlockchain has a role to play in increasing the availability of data which is independently verified by third parties. Such initiatives can

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build trust in reporting mechanisms and give recognition to companies who are authentically purpose-driven. Long-term, the goal is cross-sector, digital, integrated reporting similar to that provided by S&P and Moody’s in relation to credit-rating, a sort of “Bloomberg for Good”. Independent certifications and assessment tools developed by organisations such as B Corp\textsuperscript{12}, Responsible 100\textsuperscript{13} and CISL\textsuperscript{14} offer a starting point towards this ambition. However, as seen with the SDGs, it is hard to create reliable models and indicators of human well-being. Successful measurement of authentic purpose will depend on collaboratively devising new theories of value and economic development which aim to fulfil human needs within our finite planetary resources.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

Given the global challenges facing us, it is vital that all businesses, particularly the largest and most influential, develop an authentic sense of purpose so that their vast skills and resources can be directed towards humanity’s greatest challenges. Unfortunately, the potential of purpose is in danger as more companies embrace the rhetoric without following through with concrete action. Companies looking to avoid purpose-wash can structure their activities around the five pillars and keep a mindful watch on their approach to leadership, profit, sustainability and transparency.

Specifically, leaders should find ways to democratise the processes by which purpose is defined and integrated throughout their entire operations and supply chain, taking a collaborative approach which empowers employees, customers, investors and other stakeholders to play their part and to hold leadership to account. In doing so, leaders need to communicate clearly to set realistic expectations, whilst advocating an inspiring vision for the future. Authenticity of Purpose requires businesses to re-evaluate their approach to profit, so that it becomes a means and a by-product of fulfilling their purpose, rather than an end-goal in itself. This will require new conversations with investors about balancing short-term financial goals with long-term success, and incentive schemes which take into account progress towards human well-being. As purpose is integrated across all areas of the core business, operations must be carried out in a way that does no harm, and contributes to a sustainable future for people and planet. Finally, business can build transparency around their purpose by engaging with new technologies and cross-sector partnerships for measuring and evaluating progress against robust indicators of purpose-led goals. These efforts can then form the basis for a unified global system to recognise the achievements of truly purpose-led companies.

\begin{flushright}
By Vittorio Cerulli and Annabel Beales, Business Fights Poverty
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\textsuperscript{12} B Corporation (n.a.) Retrieved from \url{https://bcorporation.net}

\textsuperscript{13} Responsible 100 (n.a.) Retrieved from \url{https://www.responsible100.com}

\textsuperscript{14} Cambridge Institute for Sustainable Leaderships (n.a.) \url{https://www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/business-action/sustainable-finance/investment-leaders-group/measuring-investment-impacts}

\textsuperscript{15} For example Kate Raworth’s Doughnut Economics, \url{https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/} or Elinor Ostrom’s design principles for governing the commons, \url{http://www.elinorostrom.com/}
Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) are vital drivers of growth for large companies and the lifeblood of communities, but many continue to struggle with multiple challenges. All those organisations with a stake in their success – large companies, governments, donors and funders, and NGOs – need to move towards a more holistic and joined-up approach to enterprise support with the goal of strengthening the underlying ecosystem in which MSMEs operate.

For large companies operating in emerging and developing countries, MSMEs are key business partners along the value chain – as suppliers, distributors, retailers and customers. MSMEs can create access to untapped low-income markets. As retailers, clinics, pharmacies or service providers, they reach both rural and urban households with goods and services. As traders, farm shops, veterinarians and advisors, they support farmers. They are also key to building prosperous, healthy communities and can bridge the formal-informal divide. As such, they are critical to the achievement of the SDGs. For many large companies, MSMEs are essential partners that power business growth and achieve positive social impact.
MSMEs face multiple challenges

However, MSMEs often struggle with the difficult market environment around them. A lack of access to finance and markets, a lack of skills and an unsupportive policy environment are among the biggest obstacles. They may be able to “muddle through” and deal with informality and high transaction costs, but their development is also hampered by a lack of management capacity and scale.

To help overcome these challenges, many large companies and their partners support MSME partners in their value chain directly through training, access to finance, or other support. However, this approach can be costly and limited. Companies usually focus on one or two limiting factors, but MSMEs struggle with a number of barriers that hold them back – and these barriers are often interconnected. To really unlock the potential of MSME collaboration, large companies, alongside governments and development partners, need to move towards a more holistic and joined-up approach to enterprise support with the goal of strengthening the underlying ecosystem in which MSMEs operate.

Taking an ecosystems approach to enterprise support

The MSMEs ecosystem is made up of different inter-connected and inter-dependent stakeholders whose actions influence the success of MSMEs. It includes suppliers and buyers, as well as other actors providing finance, capacity infrastructure and rules, such as governments, banks and service providers.

For large companies, building the ecosystem for MSMEs can reach further and cost less than providing direct support. For example, instead of giving SME retailers extremely long payment targets, large companies could bring in a financial services firm that provides working capital on good terms, possibly facilitated by guarantees from the large company. All sides win.

Effective collaboration with other players in the ecosystem is critical to success. Through our research to date, we found companies working in different constellations with a whole spectrum of organisations, from local to national government, donors and funders, NGOs and social enterprises, and other large and small companies, each contributing complementary capabilities and resources.
We are currently developing a practical framework and guidance to help large companies think through how to develop an MSME ecosystem strengthening approach in their own operating contexts.

To scale financial inclusion in rural areas of Lesotho, for example, the Mobile Network Operators Vodacom and Econet closely collaborate with First National Bank, Standard Lesotho Bank, the Ministry of Finance, the United Nations Development Programme and others as part of the Lesotho SIMM Platform. Since 2017, the public and private actors have partnered to improve policies and regulations, develop new mobile money products and applications, drive financial education among rural populations, and build capacity of mobile money agents and merchants.

In Kenya, the FMCG company Unilever is partnering with Mastercard and Kenya Commercial Bank to develop a digital working capital platform, called Jaza Duka, that helps small merchants grow sales. The platform was launched in 2017 and has already reduced cash-flow challenges of over 20,000 merchants and small distributors by providing working capital. Participating merchants have experienced a 20% growth in sales on average.

Taking an ecosystem strengthening approach can be more efficient because it builds on existing capabilities, leverages external resources (thus reducing own costs), shares risks and creates the opportunity for interventions to live independently. It enables the development and growth of MSME partners, thus setting off a virtuous cycle that goes far beyond the large company’s own operations, and ultimately has the potential to transform markets and communities.

FILLING A GAP IN PRACTICAL GUIDANCE TO HELP LARGE COMPANIES APPLY AN ECOSYSTEM STRENGTHENING APPROACH

Through our research to date we have identified a dozen companies that have successfully applied this ecosystem strengthening strategy in sectors as diverse as FMCG, agribusiness, mining and financial services, and across the world in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Drawing on these examples, discussions with experts, and the advice of large company and foundation partners (AB Sugar, Bayer, Small Foundation, Vitol Foundation and Visa), we are currently developing a practical framework and guidance to help large companies think through how to develop an MSME ecosystem strengthening approach in their own operating contexts. To find out more, visit our Challenge on MSME Ecosystems website.1

Richard Gilbert, Challenge Director, Business Fights Poverty, and Christina Gradl, Managing Director, Endeva.

1 https://snipbfp.org/329xZ9F
15 years ago I was working in the London advertising industry, promoting products I didn’t believe in for clients who didn’t appreciate it. I ended up asking myself ‘What am I doing with my life?’ The lack of a sense of true purpose and meaning in my life lead me into a downward spiral and, when I was just 25, I had a complete nervous breakdown.

At my lowest ebb, I was looking around my flat at the different objects, and I thought to myself: “The table is useful because you can put things on it. The sofa is useful because you can sit on it. The TV is useful because it can entertain you. I am the only thing in this room that has no purpose or use whatsoever.” It was a devastating thought.

I tried everything to heal myself, ranging from antidepressants and psychotherapy to acupuncture and faith healers. But nothing made any difference. Then one morning, I received a random phone call from a family friend, offering me the opportunity to volunteer my marketing skills to a farming project in The Gambia. “No thank you very much”, I thought, “If I’m going to be suicidal I would rather do it from the comfort of my own living room”. Thankfully my friends and family had other ideas and a few weeks later I arrived in “The Smiling Coast of Africa”, ironically, clinically depressed.

Within just a few weeks of being in the warm embrace of The Gambia, however, I experienced a personal miracle: I came back to life. And instead of returning home as originally planned, I ended up staying for four years, running a social enterprise that worked with small-scale farmers of fruits and vegetables.

During my time in The Gambia, I witnessed first-hand the abject failure of the aid model for agricultural development in Africa. Every year millions of dollars are “invested” in time-bound “development projects”, whereby thousands of women are trained - to grow X, Y or Z cash crop, which some highly-paid consultant has identified as being the next big thing.
Tragically - and amazingly - little to no thought has been given to who is actually going to buy these crops. All the focus is on supply rather than demand. The project eventually expires and the women have little choice but to uproot the crops, go back to their traditional subsistence activities and wait for the next aid project to come along. And the downward spiral of aid dependency continues.

What is even more extraordinary, however, is that at the very same time as all this wasteful production, Africa’s rural landscape has an abundance of existing and high potential indigenous crops - which go completely overlooked. In fact, more than 25% of the world’s botanical species originate from Africa, but less than 1% of what we see on the shelf in the $1tn+ global health and wellness market. This statistic tells its own story. The very most extraordinary example of this dynamic is what we have come to call ‘The Inspiring Possibility of Baobab’.

Baobab is the highly nutrient-dense fruit of Africa’s “Tree of Life”. It is rich in vitamin C, prebiotic fibre and antioxidants and has a delicious zingy sherbet flavour: if there is such a thing as a superfood then this is it. It also happens to be the only fruit in the world that dries naturally on the branch, meaning it does not require refrigeration, and just needs to be harvested and sieved to produce an organic superfruit powder. It gets better.

There is no such thing as a baobab plantation; every tree is community-owned and wild-harvested. Growing in the driest, remotest regions of 32 African countries, up to 10 million rural households can supply baobab fruit from a crop that is so abundant it goes mostly waste. National Geographic estimated that if there were a global demand for baobab this existing crop could be worth a billion dollars to rural Africa.
THE ONLY PROBLEM IS THAT 95% OF PEOPLE HAVE NEVER HEARD OF IT.

So what would need to happen for this inspiring possibility to become a reality? We would need to create that demand. To manifest a market. Or, in other words, we need to Make Baobab Famous.

The company I co-founded, Aduna is an Africa-inspired superfood brand and social business. Our mission is to do just that: to create an international market for under-utilised African natural products like baobab, thereby creating sustainable incomes for rural African households. We call it “the demand creation model”.

Through our #MakeBaobabFamous campaign we have catalysed the creation of a global market for baobab. Within this, through our own proprietary value chain, we are now generating entirely additional incomes for over 1,100 women in 35 communities in Northern Ghana and Southern Burkina Faso, where our supply chain is based. And we are just getting started. In Northern Ghana alone there are more than 8,000 communities who could participate in the value chain if only the market were big enough.

This is where we hope that you and the organisations you work for come in. If we are to create a new billion-dollar industry for rural Africa we need the support of the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. In partnership, we can scale the demand for baobab and turn it into a household name; the new “must-have” ingredient for food and beverage manufacturers and shorthand for “ethical, sustainable and healthy”. If you feel inspired to help us and to create lasting transformation for millions of rural African households, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Andrew Hunt, Co-Founder and CEO, Aduna

EDITOR’S NOTE

Coming from an extremely challenging psychological space to find a renewed sense of purpose, it was a pleasure to welcome Andrew to Business Fights Poverty Oxford 2019 as our closing keynote speaker, to share his story.

Budding social entrepreneur, investor, or forward-thinking company looking to build a resilient supply chain? Then Andrew’s keynote is one to watch! You can find out more about Aduna at www.aduna.com.
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 CLEAR, SHARED CHALLENGE, WITH A FOCUS ON DELIVERING A TANGIBLE, VALUABLE OUTPUT IN A CLEAR TIMEFRAME, YOU CREATE THE SPACE FOR GENERATING POWERFUL INSIGHTS AND DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS.

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

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 over 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 current and new Challenges focused on:

- **BUSINESS-DONOR PARTNERSHIPS:** How can international donors help businesses scale their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals? With the UK’s Department for International Development.
- **FUTURE OF WORK:** How can businesses accelerate upward mobility of entry-level in the future of work? With Walmart.
- **GENDER:** How can business advance gender equality across the value chain by engaging men as allies? With AB InBev, CARE and Stanford University’s VMware Women’s Leadership Innovation Lab.
- **GENDER:** What role can business play in tackling gender based violence? With IFC, Anglo American, Primark and CARE.
- **MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES:** How can we better support micro, small and medium enterprises in large company value chains through an ecosystems approach? With Bayer, Visa, AB Sugar, Small Foundation, Vitol Foundation and Endeva.
- **FORCED LABOUR:** How can consumer goods companies harness technology to most effectively tackle modern slavery in their global supply chains? With Nestle and WBCSD.
- **PURPOSE:** How can companies and investors collaborate to embed purpose authentically into business? With GSK, Unilever and Visa.

**SUGGEST A CHALLENGE**
If you’re a company, wanting to access fresh solutions to complex challenges

**SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE**
If you share a passion for one of our Challenge topics

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR PEERS**
Create a profile, join an online discussions or come to one of our online or in-person events.

Get in touch with use today at team@businessfightspoverty.org
ONLINE DISCUSSION: MAKE OR BUY: WHEN SHOULD CORPORATES INVEST IN INCLUSIVE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS?

Over the past two decades, large companies have started to venture into markets at the base of the global economic pyramid. However, they have often struggled to succeed with their own initiatives. Buying, that is investing into inclusive businesses externally, is an alternative way to achieve these objectives that also addresses some internal constraints to scaling these initiatives. This discussion aims to shed light on the why, the when and the how of Corporate Impact Venturing, based on a report by Endeva. This event is part of the Inclusive Business Boost series funded by the UK Department for International Development.

5 SEP 15:00 – 16:00 BST / 10:00 – 11:00 EDT

ONLINE DISCUSSION: HOW CAN BUSINESS ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY ACROSS THE VALUE CHAIN BY ENGAGING MEN AS ALLIES?

Companies are in a unique position to engage men as allies in multiple ways – in the communities they source raw materials from, in their own workplace diversity and inclusion policies, and in society at large by tackling gender stereotypes in advertising and communications. Despite the clear need to engage men as allies, real-world examples of how to do this in companies and communities are sparse. This online written discussion aims to shed light on the ways companies can and are pro-actively advancing gender equality by engaging men as allies.

11 SEP 16:30 – 17:30 BST / 11:30 – 12.30 EDT

EVENT: BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY NYC 2019

Join us for an inspiring and action-focused half-day event on how business, government and civil society are collaborating to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. Timed to coincide with the UN General Assembly, our annual invite-only Business Fights Poverty NYC event brings together 150 senior business professionals and development partners. The event combines inspiring panel discussions with opportunities for genuine peer engagement and networking. The event will include a set of themed collaboration lunches. The event is supported by Credit Suisse, CDC Group and Visa.

23 SEP 10:00 – 14:30 EDT

ONLINE DISCUSSION: HOW CAN CORPORATIONS DEVELOP AND TAILOR MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO INCLUSIVE BUSINESS?

Based on the Business Call to Action’s findings drawn from a decade of experience engaging with Inclusive Business (IB) globally, this discussion will explore the constraints within multinational corporations (MNCs) that are preventing the uptake and internalisation of IB models and the specific management practices that MNCs adopt or develop for their IB. This event is part of the Inclusive Business Boost series funded by the UK Department for International Development.

25 SEP 15:00 – 16:00 BST / 10:00 – 11:00 EDT

ONLINE DISCUSSION: WHAT CAN BUSINESS DO TO STRENGTHEN MSME ECOSYSTEMS IN FRONTIER MARKETS?

MSMEs play a critical role in large company value chains as suppliers, distributors, retailers and customers and in communities as generators of jobs and livelihoods. Given the multiple systemic constraints they face, there is growing recognition that all those organisations with a stake in their success – large companies, governments, donors and funders, and NGOs – need to move towards a more holistic and joined-up approach to enterprise support, with the goal of strengthening the underlying ecosystem in which MSMEs operate. This session will explore practical ways that large companies and their partners can make this shift on the ground.

21 NOV 15:00 – 16:00 GMT / 10:00 – 11:00 EST

EVENT: BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY DC 2020

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

15 APR 9:00 – 17:00 EDT

Dates and times are subject to change. Please refer to the Business Fights Poverty website for up-to-date information.
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