Global Economy and Development at BROOKINGS

Policy Paper 2012-01

GLOBAL VIEWS

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Scaling Up Corporate Social Investments in Education: Five Strategies that Work

Justin W. van Fleet
Post-Doctoral Fellow
Center for Universal Education

MAY 2012
The Brookings Institution
1775 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036

Scaling up good corporate social investment practices in developing countries is crucial to realizing the *Education for All* and *Millennium Development Goals.* Yet very few corporate social investments have the right mix of vision, financing, cross-sector engagement and leadership to come to scale. Globally, 67 million children are not enrolled in primary school, over 200 million are in school but not mastering basic skills such as reading, and many millions more complete post-primary education without the skills needed to participate in society or the local economy. Overcoming these challenges will require swift and bold action by many actors, including governments, multilateral organizations, donors and civil society. Corporations can use their core assets to generate shared value for business and society by helping get children into school, setting a strong learning agenda and scaling up what works in education. This policy paper looks at what works and what is not working in corporate efforts to further education in developing countries.

The business assets of major corporations—such as innovation, financing, employee talent, labor networks, technology, and advocacy—have the potential to help developing countries make rapid advances in education. Smarter corporate social investments can be good for business operations. Investments in education can increase results-oriented outcomes, narrow the global talent gap, boost consumers' disposable income, enhance the health and well-being of employees and their families, facilitate the ease of doing business in developing countries and improve government and community relations.[1] However, the current "business as usual" model of corporate social investments in education will not realize this vision. Since the early 2000s, major efforts to bring collective corporate resources to support *Education for All* have demonstrated few results and little impact. In contrast to global health, this has been a lost decade of private sector engagement in global education.[2] Research shows that in the aggregate corporate resources to support global education are deployed in an inefficient manner. They are small, short-term and disconnected from larger efforts, and fail to address systemic challenges or the needs of the most marginalized.[3]

There is a window of opportunity to harness corporate support for long-term impact in education. In fact, the business community is demonstrating a renewed interest in improving engagement in education and taking initiatives to scale.[4] Meanwhile, national governments, multilateral organizations, donor governments and foundations are expressing increased interest in collaborating with the corporate sector to help expand quality education.[5] Companies should strive to adhere to five principles of business engagement in education to take full advantage of this opportunity and have a profound impact on scaling up what works in education. Drawing upon successes from education, health and other development sectors, this paper highlights how these five principles can be embraced by the business community to achieve practical impact in global education.

Corporations can use their core assets to generate shared value for business and society by helping get children into school, setting a strong learning agenda and scaling up what works in education.

Five Principles for Scaling Up Better Business Engagement in Education

Scaling up entails "expanding, adapting and sustaining successful policies, programs or projects in different places and over time to reach a greater number of people."[6] Learning lessons from the experience of various development sectors about generating shared value[7] presents an opportunity for the corporate sector to make a renewed effort to take successful education initiatives to scale. There are five principles[8] to guide future business engagement in education to help business play a more sustainable and scalable role:

1. **Make investments in learning part of the core business of companies.** Corporations should assess and identify how their core business competencies can address global education challenges.
2. **Adopt benchmarks to measure learning outcomes and promote equity, and monitor results.** Corporate engagement in education must be tied to outcomes-based metrics allowing companies to identify what works in order to share and scale up good practice and discontinue ineffective activities.
3. **Collaborate with the other key stakeholders, including developing country governments, civil society, donors, multilateral organizations and other companies.** If companies leverage their contributions and assets with other companies, foundations, multilateral organizations, donors and governments, the shared social and direct business value can outweigh any individual contribution.
4. **When possible, enhance government capacity to reach marginalized children and provide a quality education.** The relationship between corporate engagement and the government is a two-way street: lessons from corporate-sponsored projects can inform policy while policy can guide best practices in project development. The longer-term goal of any corporate social investment in education should be to improve government's capacity to provide quality education at scale.
5. **Play a leadership and advocacy role.** Because of the connection between education and business, companies must play a leadership and advocacy role to ensure education is a priority at the highest levels of political leadership.

Principle One: Make investments in learning part of the core business of companies.

Sustainable corporate engagement in education requires a company to connect its core business and competencies to address discrete educational challenges at local or global levels. Research demonstrates that despite the approximate half billion dollars directed from U.S. companies to education in developing countries, the current corporate practices result in small, short-term interventions and little measureable change on the ground.[9] Using core business activities allows a company to make its commitment to education part of its day-to-day operating practices, which ensures sustainable, long-term engagement. Serious investments tied to core business can generate social value and sustainable business value, leading to systemic change.

Exploring ways that core business competencies can simultaneously address social needs will make engagement in social sectors more sustainable and scalable. For instance, inclusive business models embed a set of strategies and policies where the company is explicitly aiming to increase access to products and services or to livelihood opportunities in their value chain by including low-income producers, employees and consumers.[10] Alongside core business activities, corporate philanthropy can play an important part in allowing companies to be seen as innovators who are piloting new models to promote quality education and scale up in marginalized areas. Even investments in short-term pilot programs should establish the necessary partnerships to take what works to scale. Thinking about scaling through core business lends itself to ways that business can make longer-term, predictable social investments as opposed to the current status quo of short-term education contributions which cannot achieve systemic, scalable change or deliver the educational outcomes that business needs. The four examples below outline how companies have applied core business models to social challenges to generate shared value.

Example 1: Applying Coca-Cola's Distribution Network to Global Health Challenges in Tanzania[11]

In Tanzania, Coca-Cola is piloting a new program to address the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS with the goal of making anti-retroviral medications as accessible to the average individual as a bottle of soda. Approximately 5.6% of all adults in the country are infected with HIV/AIDS, with rates as high at 15 percent for adults in some regions. After decades of working in the country, Coca-Cola has developed a variety of methods to get its beverages to nearly 900,000 retailers in the hardest to reach areas. Many of these last mile logistics require using a donkey or other method to transport products on unpaved roads or ones that are impassable during the rainy season. Coca-Cola is using its influence as a major retailer to take to scale the Tanzanian government's current distribution initiative for malaria medication, anti-retroviral medication and other drugs. At the onset of the collaboration, the government plan was only able to reach 500 health facilities in the country. With the goal of reaching all 5,000 health centers and keeping medication in stock, Coca-Cola is sharing its supply-chain, distribution partners and delivery routes with the government agency in charge of transporting the medication. The hope is that the sharing of knowledge of core business distribution competency with government health officials will promote healthy outcomes in many of the communities where Coca-Cola sells its products. This example underscores how a business model and technical expertise of last mile delivery was applicable to the health sector. For education, it demonstrates how core business models for distribution of physical objects could help ensure educational materials reach marginalized areas that consumer goods already reach. This can also apply to other business models such as financial delivery, human resources deployment or communication.

Example 2: Arcor's Investment in the Communities where it Operates

Community stability and well-being are key to business success as businesses cannot thrive if the society in which they are operating is socially unstable. Arcor Group, a large Argentine consumer foods company, works consciously through their philanthropic arm, Fundacion Arcor, to foster development and promote educational success through early childhood development (ECD) in the communities where they have operations. In 2007, Arcor Group launched a program in Entre Rios, a province northeast of Buenos Aires, in collaboration with provincial education authorities and a national research center to enhance the linguistic and cognitive development of children. The program reached more than 20,000 kindergarten children and 1,300 teachers. The students in the program nearly doubled their vocabulary in one year and arrived in first grade more prepared to learn.[12] Fundacion Arcor not only works to improve the educational outcomes of learners but also to strengthen education service providers through financial support, technical assistance, and training for organizations implementing ECD programs. Fundacion Arcor has supported more than 1,800 educational projects, benefiting more than 2,077,940 children and teenagers in Argentina.[13] Throughout all of their programs, Fundacion Arcor has made a sustained effort to engage with the communities in which they operate to improve the climate for business operations and the health of the communities at large. This Argentine example demonstrates how a consumer goods company has made a direct link between community well-being and the well-being of the business. This has served as the catalyst for their educational investments which improve Arcor's overall competitive context in the communities where they operate.

Example 3: Standard Bank Group's Core Competencies Improve the Effectiveness of Global Fund Grantees

Standard Bank Group is South Africa's largest bank with operations in 17 African countries.[14] In 2008, Standard Bank Group entered into a pro-bono agreement with the Global Fund, utilizing the company's core business competency to provide pro-bono financial and management expertise to Global Fund grant recipients.[15] The services offered are completely voluntary and demand-driven and include financial management training, financial management software, and other capacity building activities for grant recipients.[16] Additional benefits provided to the Global Fund and its recipients include support services to ensure funds arrive to grantees in a timely manner and assistance with their financial administration and reporting requirements.[17] Initially piloted in Lesotho, Nigeria, Swaziland and Uganda, additional countries in the continent have been added, including Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Standard Bank Group reports that this partnership has enabled the company to use its "core competencies to improve the financial and operational management performance of Global Fund recipients, while aligning its efforts with its long-term business interests."[18] The case of Standard Bank demonstrates how financial expertise has been provided to grantees of the Global Fund in the health sector; similar arrangements could be made to promote fiscal transparency and responsible financial management in the education sector—both inside and outside of government.

Example 4: The Airline Industry Engaging Consumers to Mobilize Funding for Global Development

The way a company interacts with its consumer base is a core business competency that can be applied to social causes. In the instance of the airline industry, face-to-face interactions with international travelers provide a source of financial support for social causes. The "Change for Good" partnership was set up in 1987 by UNICEF and the airline industry to provide an opportunity for passengers to donate their spare change in foreign currencies on international flights. In 2010, the average British citizen returned from an international flight with about £28 (~$40) in international coins and bills. Since the program's inception, multiple international airlines participating in the initiative have generated over $90 million for UNICEF's programs.[19] In other similarly structured airline programs, British Airways' "Flying Start" program aims to raise £8m by 2013 for Comic Relief and Virgin Atlantic's "Change for Children" raises an average of £45,000 monthly for Free the Children.[20] The case demonstrates how the airline industry has used a key asset—access to a large consumer base on a daily basis with disposable money—to direct resources to address global development challenges.

Principle Two: Adopt benchmarks to measure learning outcomes and promote equity, and monitor results.

Companies currently have little evidence about whether their investments in education promote learning outcomes. Corporate social investments in education should be held accountable for results just as any other business investment. Programs that do not lead to learning outcomes for children or adults should be reconfigured or discontinued while models that do promote learning should be scaled up. However, for this to take place, companies must adopt learning metrics, evaluate the impact of investments, and forge the correct partnerships so that these programs can come to scale. Corporate philanthropy should invest in piloting and measuring the impact of new innovations and models so that the results can be shared with the broader community to improve collective learning about what works in education. The three examples below illustrate how the corporate community has used evaluations to measure the impact of social investments in order to scale up successful models that deliver results.

Example 5: Telecom Works with Stanford to Integrate Technology and Learning[21]

Telecom Argentina, in partnership with Stanford University, local NGOs, and in collaboration with Argentina's ministry of education, is piloting a program using the latest advances in mobile technology to increase access to education and improve learning outcomes in rural areas. The program, Stanford Mobile Inquiry-based Learning Environment (SMILE), uses smartphones and tablets in 10 primary and secondary schools to build the local capacity to utilize mobile technology to increase critical thinking, literacy and an interest in the sciences. The devices allowed students and teachers to participate in educational workshops as each phone comes equipped with applications containing school curriculums covering various subjects—including reading, math, science, Spanish and English—and multiple grade levels. With the intention of strengthening the 21st century skills of the students, the program encourages group work, critical thinking and problem solving through dynamic teaching methods and a collaborative learning environment. Through Telecom's corporate social responsibility initiative, the partnership allows Stanford to share its pedagogical and evaluation expertise in areas important to Telecom by using the company's infrastructure to support the programs. With evaluating the impact on learning outcomes a central part of the program's design, pending positive results, Telecom intends to scale the model following the pilot to additional schools. This example from Telecom in Argentina demonstrates how partnering with organizations with technical expertise in educational evaluation can provide evidence about the impact of new technological innovations on learning. If the evaluation demonstrates results, scaling up will have positive social and business implications.

Example 6: Gap Inc. Takes Investments in Female Garment Workers' to Scale through Evaluation

The garment industry is one of the largest employers of women globally. [22] While women comprise 80 percent of the workforce in the industry,[23] a disproportionately few number of women end up advancing to positions of management within the industry.[24] For over 40 years, Gap Inc., an apparel retailer, has invested in communities where employees live and work under the auspices of its foundation and corporate social responsibility programs.[25] In 2007, Gap Inc. made it a priority to invest in the women working in the garment industry where many of its products are sourced. The company set up PACE (Personal Advancement and Career Enhancement)—a program that aims to provide life and technical skills training to advance the careers and lives of female factory

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workers in developing countries beyond entry-level positions. In developing the program, Gap, Inc. worked with CARE as an implementation partner, local vendors and NGOs, and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) to create the education program.[26] Additionally, ICRW has served as an external, impartial evaluation partner to assess the program's impact. Its evaluations indicate that the program has improved the participants' levels of confidence, communication skills and financial management skills.[27] Recommendations for tweaking and improving the program model or making specific adaptations for particular contexts have also resulted from the evaluation process and have been integrated into the program. With more than 7,500 participants to the date, the program has expanded to vendor locations in Vietnam, Bangladesh, China and Sri Lanka. Based on the success of the program, Gap Inc. intends to expand to factories in India and Cambodia with other implementation strategies for more countries under development.[28] Gap Inc. also hopes that when the model is refined, it will be shared with other companies working in the garment industry to expand the program beyond the company's individual supply chain footprint.[29] This case highlights the importance of working with experts to conduct program evaluations from the start. For Gap, Inc., the program evaluation generated the evidence needed to make the internal case to scale up the program in additional locations.

Example 7: BHP Billiton Scales Up through Catalyzing Malaria Control in Southern Africa

Malaria prevalence in Southern Africa directly impacted the operating communities of BHP Billiton, the world's largest mining company. At BHP Billiton's Mozal plant in Mozambique, the company reported 6,000 malaria cases, 300 medical evacuations and 13 fatalities during a period of two years; its ability to attract expatriate employees was also at risk.[30] The Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative (LSDI), a trilateral initiative between the governments of Mozambique, South Africa, and Swaziland spearheaded by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in South Africa was put into place to address high malaria transmission in the area bounded by the Lubombo mountains in Southern Africa.[31] BHP Billiton provided nearly $500,000 and in-kind management resources to implement LSDI's malaria control program, including space for the storage of insecticides, and monitored the impact of the program on the ground.[32] The evaluation provided convincing empirical evidence of the program's effectiveness. After a successful initial development phase sponsored by BHP Billiton, the results of the monitoring and evaluation were leveraged for sustainable support and implementation. The Global Fund was solicited to support a long-term scale up of the project and, through the Regional Coordinating Mechanism, approved two grants totaling $47 million to scale up and sustain the initiative in the region.[33] In this example, BHP Billiton's investments in an initial pilot and evaluation of a malaria control program allowed them to leverage millions of dollars in investment from the Global Fund to take the initiative to scale.

Principle Three: Collaborate with the other key stakeholders, including developing country governments, civil society, donors, multilateral organizations and other companies.

Corporate assets are unique and can bring much to bear on the global education crisis but the corporate sector cannot solve global education challenges by itself. Corporate investments can have a maximum systemic impact by leveraging investments of other business partners as well as those of developing country governments, civil society, donor governments, multilateral organizations and private foundations. Each entity has unique assets that can be complementary to one another. While coordination and collaboration is not an easy task, leveraging corporate assets alongside other partners can have significant impacts in education. There are even instances where coalitions of competitors can come together to address systemic challenges that benefit the broader business community and cannot be addressed by a single company.[34] These collective efforts for social good also promote collective business needs by spreading the investment risk and creating the partnership potential for taking good programs to scale. The lessons below show how cross-sector partnerships can lead to sustained shared benefit and scalable interventions.

Example 8: HERproject Brings Together Stakeholders for to Promote Women's Health[35]

In 2007, Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) launched the HERproject, bringing together partners from companies, NGOs, factories, employees and health clinics to promote women's health through a factory-based model. BSR facilitated a process of mapping the needs and assets of a variety of partners with interest in women's health in factory-based environments. BSR worked to promote international corporate investment by linking women's health to business value. The organization then created networks between health service providers and supplier factories to create cost-effective and relevant interventions. Then female workers were engaged in workplace health education and provided with access to health programs. Collaborating with the USAID Extending Service Delivery (ESD) initiative, a return on investment (ROI) study found a 3:1 return on the project's investments in women's health in Bangladesh. Through ESD and the Levi Strauss Foundation, additional ROI studies are underway in Egypt and Pakistan. The initiative now works in Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Kenya, Pakistan and Vietnam. By the end of 2010, HERproject had reached 50 factories and over 72,000 women workers. Cost-sharing between 14 international brands financed 35 percent of the total project cost. In this example, the HERproject brings together the business community with non-profit and government partners to promote a scalable model to promote women's health. By working together and branching beyond bilateral social investments, the companies took a program to scale at a lower cost and with higher gains through leveraged investments and expertise.

Example 9: Teach For All Uses Business and Civil Society to Strengthen Education[36]

Teach For All is a global network of national organizations working to expand educational opportunities by adapting the model of Teach For America (U.S.) and Teach First (U.K.) to their contexts. The organizations in the network recruit and develop leaders of all academic disciplines to commit two years to teach in high-need areas and to work throughout their lives, both within and outside of education, to address the root causes of educational inequity. Teach For All currently operates in 23 countries, providing direct technical assistance, lessons and innovations across its network to help national organizations achieve scale and increase their impact.

Since its launch in 2007, Teach For All has started to build a strong base by leveraging the resources and collaborative efforts of multiple multinational corporations to support the network's efforts while simultaneously providing a global platform for these companies to meet their own social responsibility objectives. Partnerships between Teach For All and the corporations have allowed these companies to penetrate markets of interest, provide executives with board leadership opportunities, engage employees across branch offices, and put their core business to use in some of the world's highest need contexts.

Multiyear corporate partnership models have been essential to achieving scale. For example, Deutsche Post DHL provides global resources to Teach For All and supports seven other network organizations. Teach For All has worked with the company to create a flexible set of sponsorship benefits—which includes employee engagement opportunities, brand visibility and executive engagement such as board leadership and speaking opportunities. As one of the network's earliest supporters, Visa provides essential resources to fuel Teach For All's global programs, and Chairman and CEO Joe Saunders serves as the Teach For All board chair. Google has also invested in Teach For All's global work and shares its incredible online education resources with the network. With their support, Teach For All will enhance STEM education by placing thousands of new STEM teachers in countries across the globe. Lastly, in addition to its financial contributions, Teach For All has worked with Credit Suisse to identify skills-based volunteer opportunities in countries across the network. Credit Suisse employees spend one week supporting a Teach For All member organization on a number of assignments tailored to the organization's need, such as establishing financial systems, developing marketing campaigns or strategic planning. These complementary investments made by a handful of key companies have allowed Teach For All to establish its foundation for accelerating the impact of a network of national programs and have also provided the companies with a strong brand in which to invest and increased visibility for both their corporate and philanthropic work. This example demonstrates how corporations can make collaborative investments to advance a common social goal that benefits all stakeholders.

Principle Four: When possible, enhance government capacity to reach marginalized children and provide a quality education.

While business can make significant contributions to global education, government coordination is vital if initiatives are to come to scale in meaningful ways and to promote systemic, generational change. Governments are the largest source of education financing in developing countries. Education is a public good and for innovation from the corporate sector to reach scale and have an impact on the bottom line of the business community, investments in education must be conducted in harmony with national education plans and aim to enhance government capacity. In many contexts, governments have the ability to scale proven models developed by business through their national education plan strategies and external financing mechanisms. Other times, coordination with the government can improve its capacity to implement a program and makes corporate engagement more sustainable. The examples below demonstrate how companies have worked with governments in the health and education sectors to take investments to scale.

Example 10: AngloGold Ashanti Scaling Up Malaria Control in Africa Increases Employee Productivity[37]

Headquartered in South Africa, AngloGold Ashanti is a global gold producer that operates in 22 countries. In 2005, an average of 2,500 of its employees in the Obuasi mining town in Ghana were treated at the local mine hospital for malaria. The impact of malaria on the company was clear: nearly 7,000 work days were missed monthly due to the illness and worker productivity was low as recently ill employees continued to recover while back at work. AngloGold Ashanti implemented a comprehensive malaria control program in 2006, including spraying private and mine dwellings, distributing bed nets, and community education programs. The cost was $1.7 million for the first year and then $1.4 million for subsequent years.

The impact of the program was significant. Malaria treatment was down by 83 percent at the Obuasi hospital and employee absenteeism as a result of malaria was reduced to 183 work days per month. School attendance in the district also increased 70 percent. In 2008, the Country Coordinating Mechanism in Ghana submitted a proposal to the Global Fund to scale up a national malaria program in 40 districts based on the Obuasi model and proposed AngloGold Ashanti Malaria Control Limited—a subsidiary of AngloGold Ashanti designed to administer malaria control programs—as the implementer. The Global Fund Board approved funding of $36 million over two years and $154 million over five years to scale up and implement the program. Operations began in July 2011, later than initially anticipated, given the need for a parliamentary act to grant a tax and import duty exemption for a private sector principal recipient of grant money.[38] The Global Fund cites several lessons learned from this project, including the need for political will to bridge misconceptions between the public and private sectors as well as the creation of a non-profit corporate subsidiary to implement the program and provide transparency. By working with the government to scale up and a global funding mechanism able to provide financing to non-government actors, AngloGold Ashanti played a major role in combating malaria in Ghana. The program led to large scale health outcomes spilling over into increased worker productivity and school enrollment rates benefiting the bottom line for business and society.

Example 11: ICICI Achieves Scale through Collaboration with Indian Government

The ICICI Bank is India's second largest bank with assets over $90 billion. It has 2,500 branches in India and a presence in 19 countries worldwide.[39] Founded in 2008, the ICICI Foundation builds upon the inclusive growth principles of the bank and explicitly works within public systems and independent organizations to support development.[40] During 2011, the ICICI Foundation made a strategy shift in its approach to education and made the primary focus of its work government partnership.[41] The elementary education portfolio of

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the ICICI Foundation aims to work to improve the quality of school processes and outcomes in India's public education system.[42] By working directly with the government, ICICI can reach a scale otherwise not possible and make systemic changes that impact the quality of education and learning in a more impactful, sustainable manner that creates shared value. ICICI aims to do this through four areas: textbook and curriculum development, teacher education, governance and institutional accountability, and information and communications technology (ICT). In Chhattisgarh, ICICI textbooks reached about 4.5 million students in public schools.[43] Through teacher education, ICICI aims to create institutional spaces for teacher education at the state and district levels. The governance and accountability work focuses on the professional development of administrative functionaries in government school systems. The ICT initiative is working on developing and piloting models for in-service teacher education that can be brought to scale by the government.[44] The systems-based approach coupled with direct government coordination makes the reach and scale of ICICI's investments much larger by working to improve and build upon existing public sector systems.

Example 12: Hess's Investments in Education in Equatorial Guinea[45]

In 2006, Hess Corporation partnered with the government of Equatorial Guinea and the Academy for Educational Development (AED, now FHI 360) to launch a large-scale effort to transform primary education in the country. The PRODEGE program (Programa de Desarrollo Educativo de Guinea Ecuatorial) was initially a five-year contribution to support a public-private partnership for a national education initiative in which Hess invested $20 million and the government made a matching investment. This project was brought forth after a high-level agreement between the president of Equatorial Guinea and the president of the Hess Corporation. Given strict legal frameworks prohibiting financial transactions from companies directly to foreign governments, a third party implementer, AED, was brought in to design and implement the plan. A planning process was conducted by AED involving the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport through which teachers and administrators had the opportunity to provide input into the program. AED provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Education by training half of the country's teaching force in a new active learning pedagogy, refurbishing and updating model schools, and reorganizing teacher training programs to reach all future trained teachers in the country. The program was also subject to a third party independent evaluation. A core component of the program was capacity building within the ministry so it can continue to implement the program in the future. It is estimated that the program has reached roughly half of the students enrolled in primary school in Equatorial Guinea.

The Hess Corporation's approach to PRODEGE exemplifies some of the better practices in corporate engagement in education to sustainably scale up: direct coordination with government, a focus on capacity building, long-term commitment, and measuring impact. The program provides the company with positive government and community relations while at the same time developing shared value for society by increasing the talent of young people through enhanced education and learning. The multi-year support for PRODEGE, uncommon for many corporate social investments, mirrors the longer timeframe of Hess's business engagement, which extends well beyond a decade. While the scale of the program is wide, it is important to keep in mind that achieving scale may also be due to some of the unique country context characteristics, such as a relatively undemocratic government structure and a population of less than one million people. Nonetheless, the example shows how working with the government can leverage matching investments in public money for education and build country-level capacity extending beyond a corporation's presence in a country or community.

Principle Five: Play a leadership and advocacy role.

In addition to adjusting practices in program design and implementation to achieve scale, the corporate sector has an additional asset it can leverage to scale up in the social sector: leadership. The high-level political leadership of CEOs as well as practical leadership given the social priorities and financing of a company can leverage wider scale change in society. The voice of the business community can catalyze positive political and behavioral changes that make issues such as environmental sustainability, public health or education a priority. This is particularly important for the education sector at a time when donor countries are reducing foreign assistance budgets for education and domestic budgets for education are shrinking as well. The example below demonstrates how the corporate sector, with civil society serving as a watchdog, was able to shift environmental practices to improve both society and business sustainability.

Example 13: Unilever's Rallying of Other Competitors and Civil Society for Sustainable Palm Oil

Palm oil is a highly versatile product found in 50 percent of packaged products in grocery stores and used in foods, soaps and cosmetics.[46] Global attention turned to the sustainability of the palm oil industry in 1997 following a series of forest fires in several countries throughout the world, some of which were attributed to deforestation linked to the expansion of palm oil production.[47] Major companies such as Unilever accounted for the expanded palm oil demand and links were made between the financing for new palm oil plantations and major financial banking establishments. Public scrutiny of the palm oil industry swelled as concerns emerged regarding the palm oil industry practices, including: deforestation, loss of biodiversity, land and social conflicts, and climate change.[48]

As a purchaser of approximately 1.3 million tons of palm oil annually, Unilever recognized their stake in sustainable palm oil production but realized one company alone could not create a systemic change. The company responded to the crisis as one of the founding members of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) in 2004. The RSPO aimed to develop collective guidelines for the sustainable production among palm oil growers, processors and traders, consumer goods manufacturers, retailers, banks and investors, environmental conservation NGOs and social/development NGOs.[49] Unilever made a commitment in 2008 to purchase all of its palm oil from sustainable sources by 2015 and encouraged other companies to make similar pledges. The initial uptake of sustainable palm oil was slow; in 2009, RSPO-certified plantations were able to supply 1.5 million tons certified palm oil yet only 15,000 tons were purchased by European Union manufacturers.[50] Advocates came on board to pressure companies to adopt new business practices regarding the purchase of certified palm oil.

To make continued progress, Unilever has called for other companies to make public commitments to sustainable palm oil purchasing to reassure suppliers of the demand. They have also worked alongside 40 other companies and NGOs to combat deforestation through action and advocacy. In 2009, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) initiated a *Palm Oil Buyers Score Card* which in 2011 measured the performance of 132 major retailers and demonstrated slow but continued collective progress with 50 percent of RSPO certified palm oil being purchased.[51] A barrier to progress cited by the WWF is the transparency of companies to make public the amount of palm oil they purchase.[52] Unilever's participation in these efforts demonstrates that some global challenges can be addressed systemically by companies forging partnerships with one another—even in instances of direct competition—and working directly with civil society and government to change global standards and practices.[53] In the same way companies shifted environmental practices to improve business and the environment, the education sector could benefit from corporations showing leadership and urging governments—and each other—to prioritize education investments.

Conclusion

The engagement of the business community in global education brings new assets to traditional actors in the education sector and the potential for new partnerships. While corporations have traditionally not been very effective at demonstrating results and impact on education and learning in developing countries, lessons can be learned from successful models of corporate scaling up from other development sectors. Government policies, market forces, and philanthropy are not always optimal for making sure all young people have the quality education they deserve. However, developing mechanisms to advance the interests of private and public sector actors simultaneously with innovation can create scalable, systemic change. The opportunities for scalable action in education are clear: tens of millions of children are out of school, those enrolled are not learning, and young people are leaving school without the skills they need. Common to all of the examples of scaling up from various global development sectors are drivers that move piloted interventions to scale: ideas, vision, leadership, external catalysts and incentives, and accountability.[54] As companies take the steps to assess their key assets, identify which educational challenges are most relevant to their business, and utilize the five principles of corporate investment, there is potential for scaling up in education in a meaningful way.

Endnotes

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4. The is evidenced by private sector engagement activities taking place at UNESCO, the Global Partnership for Education, and the Global Business Coalition for Education.

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