

Partnerships for Progress

A summary of expert perspectives from the
2018 Unilever-GlobeScan SDG Leadership
Forum on Goal #17: Partnerships for the Goals



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328 attendees

from **39** countries

4 hours of online, text discussion

1,167 individual comments

What we set out to do

On 14th March 2018, a diverse range of stakeholders from civil society, government, multilateral organizations, and the private sector joined hosts GlobeScan and Unilever for the SDG Leadership Forum for Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals. The Forum was a global, online, text-based discussion with participants from 39 countries. Over the course of two sessions, held at different points during the day, guest contributors from 17 organizations were invited as panellists to help seed the discussion. Together, we explored how partnerships can help fund the Goals and scale up social entrepreneurs.

This Report summarises what we heard across the discussions and identifies key challenges and priorities for action.

A full list of the participating guest contributors is provided in the Appendix to this report.

The SDG Leadership Series is a set of seventeen online discussions that bring together the world's leading thinkers to share and develop strategies for making progress on the Global Goals.

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Introduction from Unilever*

The Sustainable Development Goals present an ambitious agenda and require unprecedented collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders, from government to civil society and from business to individual citizens. Platforms like this SDG Leadership Forum give us an opportunity to learn from each other, inspire fresh thinking and share best practice examples to turn ideas into actions. Collaborations like this are so critical in enabling us to achieve the Goals.

The huge range of transformational partnership examples that were shared during our Forum on SDG #17 is inspiring and demonstrates that effective collaboration is building across all levels. There remain significant challenges but it is encouraging to hear the many ideas and examples of how to overcome the hurdles and build impactful cross-sector partnerships. These solutions will help us to increase the scale and speed of our collective actions to 2030.

We know that some of the best ideas and boldest initiatives are coming from entrepreneurs and start-ups and this was proven through our discussions. These purpose-driven disruptors are creating new business models that will positively transform our economy. In order to accelerate efforts further we need even more partnerships in place to support and scale these exciting innovations – the forum discussions provide valuable direction on how we can do this.

A special thanks to all the contributors for making the time to join us and for sharing their experience and wisdom. I look forward to working together to implementing as many of these ideas as we can so that can create a better world by 2030.



Paul Polman
CEO, Unilever



*Extracted from Paul Polman's introductory video

Introduction from GlobeScan

At GlobeScan we believe more leadership is needed to inform, inspire and catalyse collective action across the SDGs. One way to foster more leadership is to listen to, engage and respond to stakeholders worldwide.

To help achieve this, we are hosting the SDG Leadership Series. This is a series of 17 – one of each of the 17 Global Goals – open, online events which will result in discussions with thousands of influential stakeholders across the world. Each forum focuses on one Global Goal, connecting stakeholders to share ideas and action for making progress on the SDGs.

We are delighted to have co-hosted the first of these forums with Unilever on 14th March 2018. Fittingly, we launched our Series with SDG #17: Partnerships for the Goals. Our specific focus was on partnerships to fund the Goals and to scale up social entrepreneurs, to further increase their positive impact. Our hope is that the hundreds of examples shared inspire a great many more initiatives in the coming years.

The SDG Leadership Series is our opportunity to help scale engagement and collective action around the Global Goals and bring us a step closer to a 2030 where we all live more sustainably and with dignity.



Chris Coulter
CEO, GlobeScan

Executive Summary

Sustainable Development Goal #17 aims to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise global partnership for sustainable development. Partnership and collaboration are crucial to achieving the other 16 Global Goals.

For our SDG Leadership Forum on Goal #17 we were joined by more than 300 participants from 39 countries across the world. Over 1,150 individual contributions contained more than 120 examples of inspiring partnerships.

Our discussions focussed on the impact partnerships can have in the provision of new models of financing the Goals and in empowering small-scale social entrepreneurs to scale up innovations to help achieve the SDGs.

The great number of inspiring examples that were shared during our online discussions show that there is an abundance of activity and creativity in this space. The challenge now is to learn from our shared experiences, build on best practice and join up our progress.

Overall, we have learned that a successful partnership needs a galvanising collective vision, alignment between partners and strong foundations including defined roles and robust project management.

Looking at finance partnerships specifically, the richness of the debate demonstrates that there remain many unresolved challenges in creating effective partnerships for financing progress on the SDGs. Among the challenges, however, dozens of examples of solutions, ideas and established resources were shared by participants in our discussions. The challenges and solutions are summarised across five crucial stages of partnership: (1) establishing the business case for financing the SDGs, (2) finding the right funding partner(s), (3) building trust, (4) effective execution and (5) impact measurement.

Access to funding was also a key tenet of discussions on how partnerships can assist in scaling social entrepreneurs. Stakeholders identified that the potential for partnerships to help scale innovations is threefold: (1) scaling the access to finance for entrepreneurs and social enterprises, (2) providing access to new and larger markets and (3) fostering access to support networks for social entrepreneurs, from formal training to informal mentorship.

The SDG Leadership Forum on Goal #17 demonstrates the high level of interest and activity around building long-term partnerships to fund and scale progress on the SDGs. The examples and ideas in this report provide a foundation from which we can learn more about how to build effective SDG partnerships.

PART 1

Partnering for the Goals: Characteristics of Successful SDG Collaboration

“ The SDGs need transformational change to be achieved, and therefore require transformational partnerships.

– **Rebecca Marmot**, Global VP Advocacy & Partnerships, Unilever

Key Takeaway:

Collaboration is essential for delivering the SDGs. To be effective, partners should ensure that collaborations fulfil three foundational criteria: agreement on a long-term vision and commitment to the SDGs; alignment on objectives, communication and transparency; and operational effectiveness through defined roles, strong project management and impact measurement.

The discussion started by considering what makes an impactful partnership. Thinking specifically of the progress we need to make towards the SDGs, we discussed what an effective collaboration looks like. The resulting ideas can be grouped into three core themes:

1. **A collective, long-term vision** is seen as crucial – a big idea and passion to drive partners towards positive impact on the SDGs.

“ The challenge of delivery is huge, and the time available relatively tight. Passion for a cause – i.e., our purpose – sustains us through challenging times and helps individuals be resilient. We will need this to be effective and to be able to sustain the rate of work required.

– **Steve Waygood**, Chief Responsible Investment Officer, Aviva Investors

2. Next, **alignment between the partners** is necessary. This can only be achieved through objectives that complement each other, speak the same language and ensure transparency between partners. Without these elements, alignment is difficult to achieve and partnerships will falter.

“ Often we find that ‘translation’ between sectors is a key part of creating and maintaining partnerships. Language is hugely powerful but it goes beyond different vocabulary. The measures, the approach, the timeframes partners work on have to be aligned or ‘translated’ for it to work.

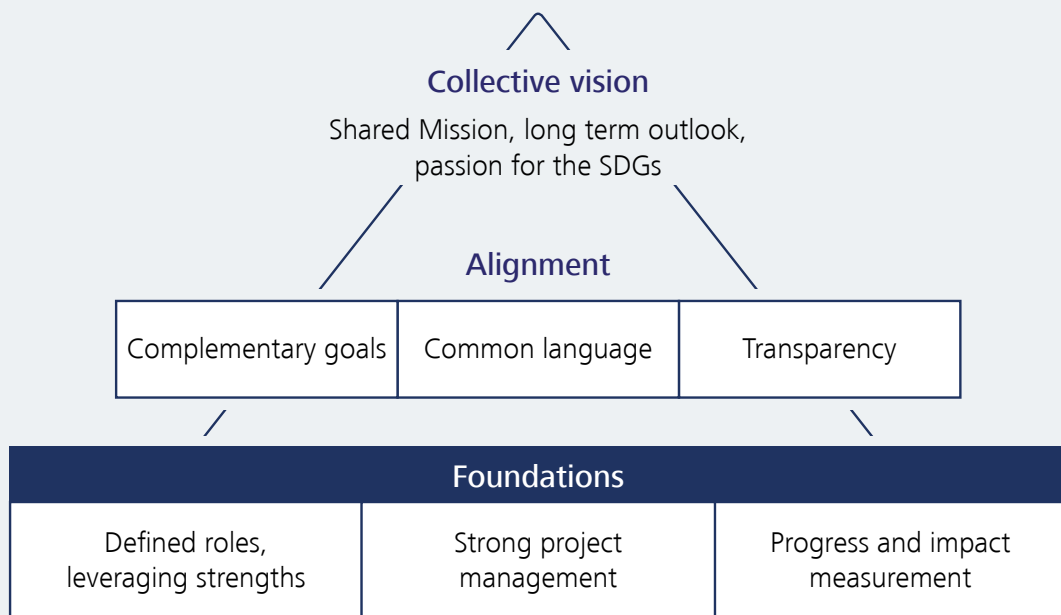
– Justin DeKoszmovszky, General Manager, Azao

3. Finally, there are the **foundations of any effective initiative for SDG progress**: defined roles, leveraging each partner’s strengths, good project management and ongoing progress and impact measurement.

“ My observation is that collaborations often falter due to lack of dedicated project management to focus on delivering that and only that. We need obsessive, dedicated Goal project managers to drive these collaborations through!

– Gail Gallie, Founder & CEO, Project Everyone

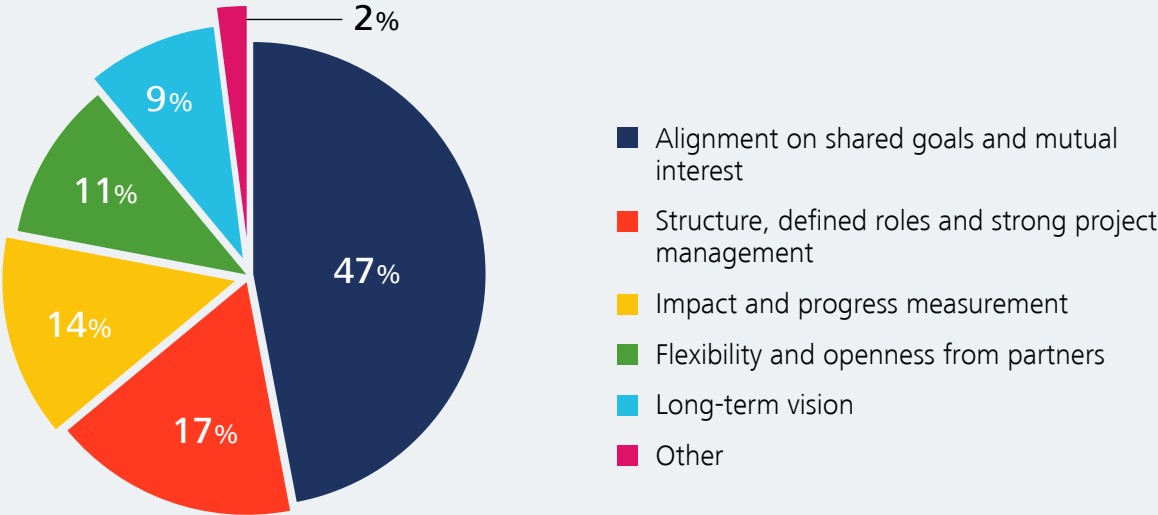
Characteristics of effective partnerships



A poll question asked stakeholders which discrete characteristic of effective partnerships they believe would have the biggest contribution to SDG impact. The survey results underline the importance of alignment on shared goals and mutual interests – rated as most impactful by nearly half of participants.

Chart 1: Characteristics of impactful partnerships

Which one of the following would have the biggest contribution in making partnerships for the SDGs more impactful?



PART 2

Partnerships for Funding

“ It is estimated that there is an annual finance gap to deliver the SDGs of trillions of dollars, vast sums of money. Public finance is insufficient. Much will have to come from the private sector as part of their business.

– **Tony Burdon**, Head of Private Sector Department, DFID

Key Takeaway:

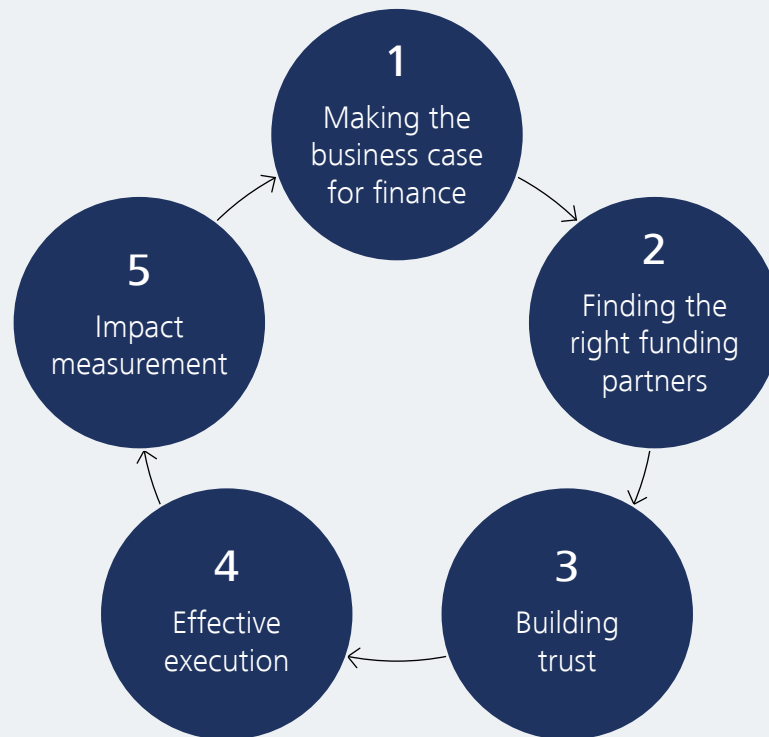
Significant investment is needed to deliver on the SDGs. To maximise funding opportunities, partners must be prepared to tackle challenges at five key stages in the partnership: building the business case; identifying the best partners; establishing trust; executing effectively through the right managers and leaders; and measuring impact.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that meeting the SDGs could require investment of between US\$5-7 trillion. The OECD estimates the total official development assistance in 2016 reached a peak of US\$142.6 billion. That leaves a very large funding gap: a need to move from the billions to the trillions and to develop and scale innovative types of partnerships to help unlock more investment in the SDGs.

There was consensus among stakeholders on the magnitude of the challenges we face in funding the SDGs. Many examples were also shared of ideas and solutions at our disposal to overcome these challenges. The roadmap for ensuring effective partnerships to fund the SDGs and navigate the many challenges, can be summarised across five stages:

- 1 Making the business case for finance
- 2 Finding the right funding partners
- 3 Building trust
- 4 Effective execution
- 5 Impact measurement

Roadmap for Funding Partnerships



1 Making the business case for finance

The challenge

Significant investment is needed to deliver on the SDGs. To maximise funding opportunities, partners must be prepared to tackle challenges at five key stages in the partnership: building the business case; identifying the best partners; establishing trust; executing effectively through the right managers and leaders; and measuring impact.

“ If we want companies to invest in a way that helps the SDGs, in many cases this will require investing in public goods. There will be private gains but they may often be longer term or to the benefit of competitors too. This does require an investor community that understands that the licence to operate for companies in part depends on the degree in which companies give back to society by investing in public goods.

– Gerbrand Haverkamp, Executive Director, Index Initiative

Solutions

Stakeholders put forward a wide variety of ideas and resources that help support a strong business case for SDG investments:

- Leverage and apply the work of the Business and Sustainable Development Commission that identifies the business case by quantifying the market opportunities that the SDGs present
- Commit to B Corporation certification, one of the movements starting to challenge short-termism in financial markets, as well as organisations such as the Fourth Sector Group, a platform aiming to accelerate “for-benefit” entrepreneurship
- Tap into development finance institutions (DFIs) like the CDC Group which can share positive experiences and examples of successful investments to overcome misconceptions around risk
- Adopt alternative innovative, more purpose-driven types of financial model to help manage expectations around difficult timeframes
- When constrained by the need to deliver financial objectives, set up “skunkworks” that report to the board separately, unconstrained by limitations of profit-maximisation
- Use robust data to identify and quantify opportunities and de-risk investments in Africa, Asia and Latin America, applying models such as lifecycle analysis (LCA)

“ We still have a long way to go before the markets we operate in are perceived as investible by commercial investors. Rightly or (mainly) wrongly there’s still a perception that Africa isn’t a place you invest. Risk drives people’s appetite for return. So you end up with a situation where 4% is OK in Europe and yet in Africa one expects 25% plus? This creates a huge bottle neck. One thing we’re committed to doing on this is share some of our 70 years of experience of investing in these markets to help tackle these perceptions and mobilise more capital.

– **Daudi Lelijveld**, Director & Head of Impact Accelerator, CDC Group

2 Identifying the right partners

The challenge

Finding the right partners is a challenge for all types of organisations for numerous reasons. Identifying potential new partners outside of the usual circles can be difficult, particularly when trying to gauge their credentials and delivery record. It can be arduous for non-finance experts to know what funding options and organisations are out there. And speaking the same “language” is very important but can be difficult for organisations with different cultures – this can be a barrier to getting partnerships off the ground.

Solutions

A number of initiatives and ideas are suggested to help support the search for new partners:

- Sharing information between organisations on how well partnerships have worked, such as a “TripAdvisor for partners” using technology and transparency to help identify new collaborations. Participants refer to the [Global Opportunity Explorer](#), developed by DNV GL Sustainia and the UN Global Compact, and [AIM2Flourish](#), an initiative of the Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit (at the Weatherhead School of Management) as sources for identifying some of the initiatives and innovations already underway and potential new partners
- Benchmarking corporate performance on the SDGs via the [World Benchmarking Alliance](#) (currently at consultation stage), with the aim to be a valuable future resource for organisations looking for potential partners and also help to introduce a common language for SDG progress
- Develop more “boundary crossers” or “tri-sector athletes” – individuals who have experience and connections across different types of organisations. Experts suggest that more training of future leaders to become boundary crossers could help bridge current gaps
- Several people mention the need to get out and about, visiting current partners in the field and attending events outside of one’s usual sphere, in order to learn the languages of other types of organisations and meet new prospective partners

“ The challenge is to get to know partners outside of the usual suspects – how do we know they walk the talk? How do we know about their skills and goals? Getting to the first base is often the hardest part – the opportunities for the different stakeholders to come together tend to end up with people talking to like-minded people. Great for bonding, but less great for bridging.

– **Lawrence Haddad**, Executive Director, GAIN

“ We have seen that if you don’t speak the same language, then the partnership ultimately falls down. This seems especially true between private sector and development organizations, where we just don’t automatically understand each other well. So it definitely makes the case to take the time up front to build that understanding.

– **M. Yasmina McCarty**, Head of Mobile for Development, GSMA

3 Building trust

The challenge

Trust between partners is critical for effective collaboration. However, it can be difficult to achieve this due in part to historic trust issues between business and civil society. Competition for funding can be fierce, and it can be challenging to break out of this competition mentality and into one of collaboration. Occasionally, corruption can be another barrier to trust.

Solutions

Ideas for building and maintaining trust between different partners include:

- A commitment to transparency, openness and accountability by potential partners from the start – only with transparency will partners bridge persistent trust gaps
- A good track record of performance and progress will also help to build trust, along with examples of organisations working together effectively in collaboration
- Being flexible in order to ensure meaningful partnerships that are not constricted by formal rules of engagement
- GlobeScan’s research suggests that in order to build trust, businesses should focus on openness and honesty and having an authentic corporate purpose

“ Trust is the elephant in the room. Historically there has been a bright line between civil society (those who do good) and private sector (typically seen as only interested in making money). We have to get beyond the ‘us vs them’ mentality – and come together over common objectives. Transparency and accountability are critical.

– **Shamina Singh**, President, Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth

4 Effective execution

The challenge

Implementation of a partnership to fund SDG progress comes with the same challenges as executing any other initiative effectively, including finding the right people to manage and lead projects. Not knowing how much funding is required or under-resourcing projects due to a lack of understanding of the challenges of integration can be another issue. And there are further challenges when individual managers and sponsors move on or when elected authorities change after elections.

Solutions

Stakeholders’ ideas here focus heavily on the importance of leadership and partnership training for individuals:

- Building leadership capabilities to equip the next generation of managers and CEOs – the Africa List, a network connecting the next generation of potential CEOs from ten African countries, was cited as a good example
- Commit to partnership training along the lines of the following examples:
 - Organisations such as the Partnership Brokers Association and PYXERA Global run cross-sector partnering training
 - Cranfield University is working with The Partnering Initiative on partnering and collaboration skills for sustainability
- Commit to multi-level buy in from colleagues across the organisation, to ensure continuity when individuals move on

5 Impact measurement

The challenge

Measuring and tracking impact is crucial for attracting and retaining funding, to establish return on investment (ROI) and support the ongoing business case. Social enterprises and non-profits can find traditional impact measurement too costly and quantification can be inherently difficult given the large variety of social, environmental and economic impacts involved. Reinforcing the need for impact measurement, as more mainstream investors see the reputational benefits of SDG investment, there is a growing risk of “SDG-washing”. Robust impact measurement is required to overcome this risk and ensure impact and progress is not diluted.

Solutions

Several frameworks, alliances and organisations (both established and in development) are available as potential supports for SDG investment impact measurement and/or helping to create standardised methods for reporting progress:

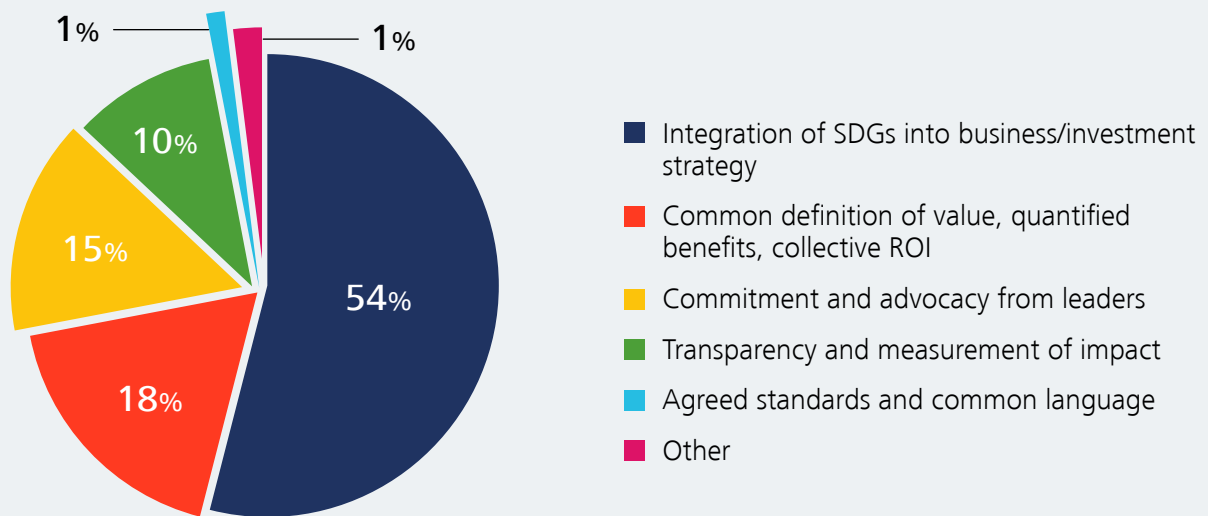
- Acumen’s [Lean Data](#) methodology is designed specifically for social enterprises and collects evidence of the social benefits people experience; the [Energy Impact Report](#) is an example of the methodology having been applied to assess the impact of Acumen’s ten years of investment into off-grid energy
- [Global Impact Investment Network](#) (GIIN), a global non-profit dedicated to increasing the scale and effectiveness of impact investing
- [The Impact Management Project](#), a convention established to provide consensus on principles and procedures for impact measurement
- [Innovations for Poverty Action](#) (IPA), a research and policy non-profit focussed on global poverty which has completed over 650 evaluations of poverty solution projects; the [Poverty Probability Index](#) is a poverty measurement tool for organizations and businesses managed by IPA
- [Socialsuite](#), a technology platform designed to help not-for profits and community service organisations measure and report on outcomes
- The [Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure](#) (in development) was set up to develop voluntary, consistent climate-related financial risk disclosures for use by companies in providing information to investors, lenders, insurers, and other stakeholders
- William Davidson Institute [Performance Measurement Initiative](#) designs and implements assessment solutions to understand the economic, social and environmental performance and outcomes of organisations and businesses operating in low- and middle- income countries
- The [World Benchmark Alliance](#), an initiative of Aviva, the UN Foundation, BSDC, and Index Initiative, is in the consultation phase to develop, fund, house and safeguard free, publicly available corporate sustainability benchmarks aligned with the SDGs

“ Measurement is a key issue – for years the complex and costly nature of impact measurement has kept many entrepreneurs and social enterprises from doing it well.

– **Tony Burdon**, Head of Private Sector Department, DFID

Chart 2: Solutions to overcoming SDG financing challenges

Which of the following is most needed to overcome the funding challenges we have to achieve the SDGs?



In order to quantify which solutions are most needed to combat these challenges generally, we posed a poll question to participants. Integration of SDGs into business/investment strategy emerges as the most important way forward, speaking to the need for compelling business cases. This is followed by the need for common definitions of value (which initiatives such as the World Benchmarking Alliance are aiming to help with) and commitment and advocacy from leaders.

Examples of Innovative Partnerships for Financing SDG Progress

To view the full forum discussions, please log in [here](#). On the discussions pages you can see the full list of examples shared.

Digital Square: co-investment model for efficient funding of digital health solutions

Lucy O'Donoghue, of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, cites an example she has come across in the health sector.

Led by Path (a global health innovation non-profit), Digital Square is an initiative that encourages more efficient investment in digital health solutions in low- and middle-income countries through an innovative co-investment model. Multi-sector financial investments in proven technology solutions are co-ordinated to ensure maximum impact and scale.

Digital Square is a USAID programme designed and funded in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, with expert input from more than 40 partner organisations.

More information [here](#).

IIX's Women's Livelihood Bond: first listed bond with dual focus on financial and social returns

Jocelyn Matayas of the Impact Investment Exchange (IIX) shares the example of IIX's Women's Livelihood Bond (WLB™), an "impact investing instrument that is impacting 385,000 women across Southeast Asia" and the world's first listed bond focusing on both financial and social returns. WLB™, a \$8 million bond, raises funds from investors seeking financial and social returns. Proceeds from the bond are lent to a "basket" of microfinance institutions and impact enterprises whose activities benefit women.

Jocelyn lists a diverse group of partners including banks ANZ, DBS Bank, law firms Hogan Lovells and Shearman & Sterling and NGOs including Rockefeller Foundation.

More information [here](#).

Mastercard and M-KOPA: technology-powered financial inclusion

Shamina Singh, President of Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, shares several examples of the work Mastercard is doing on financial inclusion. One way that improving financial inclusion can create positive ripple effects is by enabling easier access to energy.

Through a partnership with M-KOPA (which already provides affordable, safe and clean energy to 3 million people in East Africa), Mastercard QR technology is being used to scale up pay-as-you-go solar and extend its reach. Use of Masterpass QR will enable customers to easily make daily payments or top up their solar accounts so they can get access to electricity for less than they previously spent on kerosene lamps. As Masterpass QR is already used by mobile network operators and banks, this will help M-KOPA to grow without requiring additional technology investments.

The partnership highlights the potential of technology in enabling financial inclusion as a way to empower individuals and families.

More information [here](#).

Hifadhi cookstove project

Fanny Guezennec from EcoAct shared their example of the “Hifadhi” project in Kenya (meaning “preserve” in Swahili). This project is a partnership between the Livelihoods Fund and Climate Pal, a joint venture between Carbon Manna Arica (Kenyan company) and EcoAct (French company). The project distributes energy-efficient cookstoves that decrease wood consumption by 60% in rural Kenyan homes. This helps avoid deforestation, while promoting conservation and has strong health and socio-economic benefits for local people. The programme so far has benefited more than 300,000 people in 60,000 households.

Fanny credits the success of the partnership to a long-term approach and “the close collaboration of three different actors: a firm specialised on climate-SDG impact assessment and result-based financing mechanisms, a local entrepreneur and a corporate fund dedicated to fighting climate change.”

The project uses an innovative financial model where carbon credit revenues cover 100% of total project costs.

More information [here](#).

PART 3

Partnerships for Scaling Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

“ Some of the best ideas and boldest actions to advance the SDGs are coming from entrepreneurs and start-ups, driving new innovations and new business models to create the momentum the economy needs to transform itself.

– **Clive Allison**, Director of New Business Models, Unilever

Key Takeaways:

Social entrepreneurs are recognised as important and underleveraged drivers of innovation for the SDGs. In order to scale up the impact of social entrepreneurs, prospective partners should consider how to support them, not just with funding, but with invaluable access to markets and support networks.

Another main topic of our forum was social entrepreneurship and how the power of partnership can help scale up small, innovative solutions. The discussion covered individual entrepreneurs and small-scale social enterprise, both of which bring new business models and often some of the most innovative ideas that can disrupt the status quo. Individuals working for change inside larger organisations, or “intrapreneurs,” were also mentioned as potentially impactful disrupters.

Although there was general consensus about the desire to scale up the positive impacts of social enterprise, several participants mention that scaling for a small enterprise can take the form of aggregating or replicating, for example a franchise model, rather than expansion of one organisation. One example of this is micro-finance, a model which has been used across the world since Muhammed Yunus pioneered it in a small community in Bangladesh in the 1970s. Replicating innovations in this way can help to ensure that each individual initiative is flexible enough to respect local needs.

The whole discussion was inundated with inspiring examples of small-scale innovations across the world, some which remain relatively small and others which have successfully scaled to reach hundreds of thousands of people across dozens of countries.

Building on these examples, stakeholders shared learnings and best practices for how best to use partnerships to help scale social enterprise.

Three primary benefits of partnerships for social entrepreneurs emerged, all of which are fundamental for successful scaling: access to finance; access to markets; and access to support networks. Funding and access to networks emerged as the top ways to scale social enterprise/entrepreneurs in our poll (see Chart 3).

“ Such enterprises, in essence, need three areas of support and expertise. Management and financial expertise to step up and run the enterprise, investment for capital expenditure and operating costs and access to markets to convert the investment into income and profits. This requires an ecosystem of partners.

– Kavita Prakash-Mani, Practice Leader Markets, WWF

Three types of partnership support for social entrepreneurs

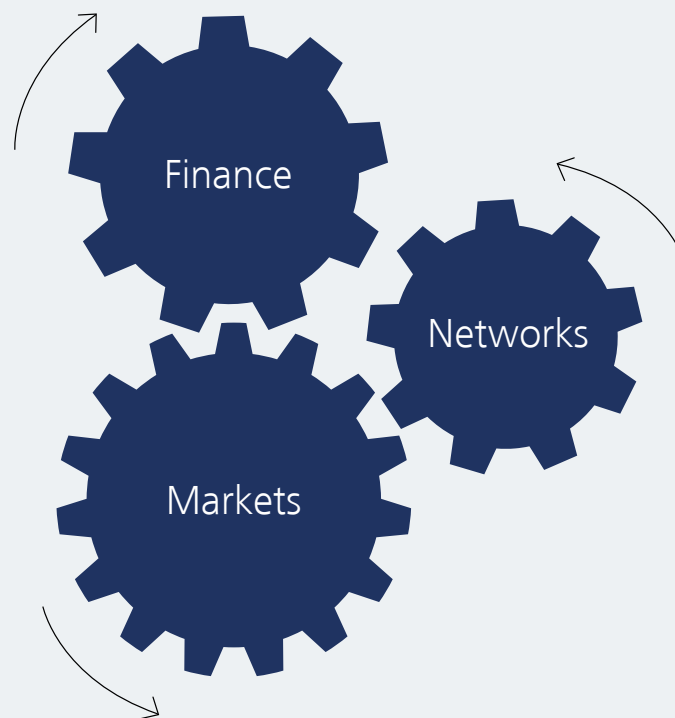
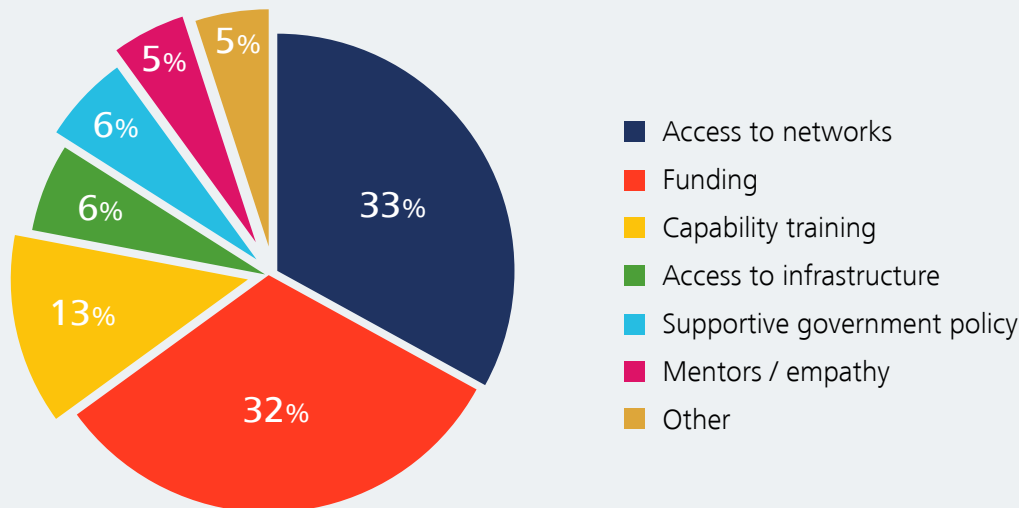


Chart 3: Support needed by social enterprises/entrepreneurs

What type of support is most needed for social enterprises/ entrepreneurs to scale up their innovations?



Access to finance

One of the clearest benefits of partnership to social entrepreneurs is the provision of funding, with the intention of helping solutions to scale. Expert participants identify a significant gap in the availability of suitable finance to take social enterprises from early-stage ideas to scalable and scaled models. The gap between philanthropic donations and commercial finance speaks to the need for more innovative solutions to bridge this and make finance available to more social enterprises at scale. Unilever's Clive Allison points to the company's work with the [Global Innovation Fund](#) to fill this gap.

A particular hurdle for social entrepreneurs to gain access to finance is the need for metrics on performance and impact. Robust impact measurement is too costly for many small entrepreneurs meaning they can be closed out of finance opportunities. Some useful impact measurement resources are listed above in our first discussion summary. For small businesses struggling to access credit, new tech-based solutions such as [Azao](#) can help to improve credit assessments.

Despite the obvious importance of access to finance, many of the comments highlighted that funding for entrepreneurs is necessary but not sufficient for scaling. The other benefits of partnerships are access to markets and support networks.

“ One of the challenges is the elevation and promotion of successful social enterprises. They are faced with the challenge of scale. We see this all the time with young student entrepreneurs and are building an alliance with a global seed-stage investment firm to invest in our alumni businesses. It’s one of the barriers to scale we are trying to alleviate.

– **Asheesh Advani**, CEO, Junior Achievement Worldwide

“ Funding to scale social enterprises in Africa is still very low and uneven, with the bulk of capital concentrated in Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria alone whereas there is innovation and social enterprise all across the continent. Because of need, a large number of private equity funds are cropping up out of necessity.

– **Elizabeth Bintliff**, CEO, Junior Achievement Africa

Access to markets

The opportunity to access markets that may otherwise not be accessible to small-scale enterprises is clearly critical when trying to scale.

Hazel Taylor from Acumen highlights the challenge that some social innovators in developing markets face – that their customers may be low-income families and individuals who are understandably risk averse, presenting obstacles when introducing new solutions. She points to the [“Four As” framework](#) put together with Bain Consultancy to help entrepreneurs to access the potential of smallholder farmers through awareness, advantage, affordability and access.

“ We promote a framework called the ‘Four As’ to address this issue and create repeatable models for scale: awareness of new products and services, how to communicate and reliably deliver on the advantage the farmer will gain by adopting innovations, how to ensure the affordability of these innovations and how to provide easy and timely access to them.

– **Hazel Taylor**, Head of Business Development, Europe, Acumen

Access to networks

The need for entrepreneurs to have access to both technical and personal support came out strongly from the discussion. These networks can take many forms – from an intense accelerator programme to a laid back co-working space, and from formal training to personal coaching. The nature and benefits of such connections can include:

- Business skills training, which is particularly important for social innovators driven by passion who may have not been trained in how to set up a business
- Mentoring, including empathy and emotional support from more “experienced hands” who may have been on the same journey themselves

Access to networks

- Networking with new connections and sharing of ideas and experiences, both successes and failures
- Provision of office space and administrative support
- Funding, including both stipends and/or investment

“ I do think that the issue of mentorship is important. The social entrepreneurial ecosystem primarily spends its resources on building the capacity of those with an idea but without any experience or background in business. If we are going to find the next unicorns of social enterprise that will move the needle forward on the SDGs, it's crucial we make sure people with great ideas have the right business coaching and mentoring, as well as more rigorous screening of their ideas.

– **Kaysie Brown**, Special Adviser and Head of Policy Planning, UN Foundation

Numerous examples are given of organisations and initiatives that exist to help support social entrepreneurs. [Ashoka](#) is recognised as the largest global network of social entrepreneurs. Participants refer to a wide variety of other types of support. For mentoring, specific initiatives included [Mara Mentor](#), [Micro Mentor](#) and [LinkedIn's global mentorship initiative](#). Other programmes are run by NGOs such as [WWF's Impact Ventures](#), [TNC's NatureVest](#) and [CARE's Scale x Design Accelerator](#). Academic-led initiatives also provide support in universities across the world, with some examples being [The Skoll Centre at Oxford University](#) and the [Lewis Institute's Babson Social Innovation Lab](#). Just this handful of examples speaks to the enormous range of support available for social and environmental innovators.

Some participants mention the need to improve further the support that is on offer to small enterprises, particularly in developing countries where the incubators may provide office space but without the training, networking or mentoring that start-ups need to flourish. At country level, one example is [Junior Achievement Africa](#) working in Gabon with the government managing the national incubators to build capacity for entrepreneurs. At a global level, the [Global Accelerator Learning Initiative \(GALI\)](#) is referenced as an initiative aiming to improve the quality of accelerator support available to innovators more widely.

“ We also need more effective entrepreneur support organisations. Because of their own lack of capacity and experience, the vast majority of incubation programs in emerging markets simply provide shared office space for start-ups without robust training and mentoring programs. As a result, less than 10% of incubator graduates in emerging markets get funded, compared to 70% among top global incubators and accelerators.

– **Tony Burdon**, Head of Private Sector Department, DFID

“ Innovation and scale are two different phases in the life of a social enterprise. Scale requires proof case from innovation and needs investors and managers focused on the systems and processes to go to scale. It requires a more institution-building effort vs a disruption effort. It may also require a shift from mission to mission and market. It requires putting governance in place and leadership in place that attracts scale support and opportunities.

– **Steve Hollingworth**, CEO, Grameen Foundation

Examples of Social Enterprise Scaling

To view the full forum discussions, please log in [here](#). On the discussions pages you can see the full list of examples shared.

Barefoot College: community-owned learning at scale

Naoko Felder shares her example of **Barefoot College**, whose Board she sits on. Barefoot College, a social enterprise founded in 1972, focusses on building “more sustainable, self-sufficient and resilient communities while valuing and respecting the knowledge and wisdom they already possess.” The policy of the Barefoot College is to teach skills to students, primarily women, from the poorest villages.

The College’s Enrich programme teaches solar engineering skills, as well as lessons in technology, finance, legal and civic rights, micro-enterprise skills, reproductive health, self-awareness and environmental stewardship. Barefoot College has used public-private partnership (PPP) models to scale community-owned solutions.

The International Solar Training Program is a collaborative effort of Barefoot College, the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) and the respective Governments and NGOs in participating countries. Partnerships with alumni, local NGOs and social enterprises allow Barefoot to customise the Enrich training to suit the needs of each region.

Barefoot College has graduated 2,670 Women Solar Engineers (“solar mamas”) from 96 countries. The College’s Enrich programme trains solar mamas to train others, creating a “new kind of viral learning” and helping scale the positive impact.

More information [here](#).

REFUNITE: reconnecting refugee families through technology

Kaysie Brown, of the UN Foundation, describes the example of **REFUNITE**, a Dutch non-profit started by two brothers David and Christopher Mikkelsen in 2008.

REFUNITE allows refugees and displaced people to “take the search for missing loved ones into their own hands” via a mobile phone, computer or help line. Through partnerships with several players in the mobile industry, including **GSMA**, **Ericsson** and mobile operators **SafariCom** and **Vodacom**, REFUNITE has scaled up to create an online, user-friendly database of more than 1 million profiles.

Facebook provides its *Free Basics* service to enable free access to REFUNITE in 17 conflict- or disaster-stricken countries around the world. Other instrumental partners include the **Clinton Global Initiative**, **UNHCR** and the **International Rescue Committee**, making this a good example of multi-sectoral partnerships that have enabled an impactful technology platform to scale.

More information [here](#).

TRANSFORM: scaling up sustainable business models

Unilever and **DFID** (the UK Government Department for International Development) founded TRANSFORM in 2015, an innovation fund with an ambition to bring private sector creativity and commercial approaches to solve persistent global development challenges. The programme combines investment of time, cash and people (via in-market support and mentorship) into social enterprises in developing and emerging markets to scale financially sustainable business models that deliver low-income household needs, helping to make progress against a range of SDGs.

To date, TRANSFORM has supported 19 projects across nine countries, which have already benefited over a quarter of a million people. The next phase, announced in January 2018, will quadruple the size of the programme, from £10 million to £40 million. TRANSFORM’s aim is to enable 100 million people in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia to gain access to products and services that have been shown to improve health, livelihoods, the environment or wellbeing by 2025.

The TRANSFORM portfolio includes: [d.light](#), mobile technology-enabled financing for solar home systems in Kenya; [Ubuntu Power](#), off-grid solar power and internet provision in Sub-Saharan Africa; [Sanivation](#), building hand washing services alongside in-home toilets in East Africa; and [Happy Tap](#), expanding out from Vietnam to provide a portable handwashing station for low-income households in Bangladesh.

More information [here](#).

List of Expert Guest Contributors

Thank you to the seventeen expert guest contributors who joined us and shared invaluable ideas and experiences from a wide range of backgrounds and geographies:

- **Asheesh Advani**, CEO, Junior Achievement Worldwide
- **Clive Allison**, Director of New Business Models, Unilever
- **Elizabeth Bintliff**, CEO, Junior Achievement Africa
- **Kaysie Brown**, Special Adviser and Head of Policy Planning, UN Foundation
- **Tony Burdon**, Head of Private Sector Department, DFID
- **Justin Dekoszmovszky**, General Manager, Azao
- **Gail Gallie**, Founder & CEO, Project Everyone
- **Lawrence Haddad**, Executive Director, GAIN
- **Gerbrand Haverkamp**, Executive Director, Index Initiative
- **Steve Hollingworth**, CEO, Grameen Foundation
- **Daudi Lelijveld**, Director & Head of Impact Accelerator, CDC
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- **M. Yasmina McCarty**, Head of Mobile for Development, GSMA
- **Kavita Prakash-Mani**, Practice Leader Markets, WWF
- **Shamina Singh**, President, Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth
- **Hazel Taylor**, Head of Business Development, Europe, Acumen
- **Steve Waygood**, Chief Responsible Investment Officer, Aviva Investors

Appendix: Additional examples of innovative financing partnerships

- The IFC Managed Co-Lending Portfolio Program allows institutional investors the opportunity to passively participate in IFC's future loan portfolio
- **Old Mutual Foundation, Stellenbosch Business School and SEED Educational Trust's** work on advancing school leadership in marginalised communities. Part of the funding comes from renewable energy projects invested in by **Old Mutual Investments**
- **DFID's** support for **ShareAction's** Workforce Disclosure Initiative which aims to use the power of institutional investors with \$10 trillion of assets under management to put pressure on companies to improve their performance on SDG #8, tackling modern slavery and child labour in their supply chains. Investors include **HSBC, L&G and Schroders**
- **Fund the People**, an initiative to encourage and support funders and non-profits to integrate talent investing into their grant-making and fundraising practices, to ensure investment in the non-profit workforce
- **The World Bank's** SDG Bonds directly link returns to the performance of companies advancing the SDGs; the World Bank plans to use the proceeds to support the financing of projects that advance its goals of eliminating extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity, and that are aligned with the SDGs
- **EU initiatives** and funding opportunities for SDG-focussed programmes
- **GAIN's** Business Platform for Nutritious Research, which seeks to increase business investments in nutritious products and services by identifying and addressing evidence gaps that are relevant to the nutrition community and limit businesses' willingness or ability to make such investments
- The **Power of Nutrition's** matching formula multiplies new financing for critical, basic nutrition supplements, services and education, and works with UNICEF and the World Bank as implementing partners to deliver results on the ground. Contributions from new investors to nutrition are multiplied by a minimum of 4x – guaranteed by pre-negotiated, co-financing arrangements
- Global Development Alliances, **USAID's** premier model for public-private partnerships; partners work together to leverage business expertise and advance core business interests in a manner that achieves development impact
- Big Society Capital, the UK wholesale social investor, engages with investors, fund managers, charities and social enterprises to make it easier to use social investment
- Local government partnerships with business and civil society can help to leverage additional funds for collective action; examples shared include Barcelona and Montreal
- **Symrise** partners with local bergamot supplier **Capua 1880** as well as the **Union for Ethical BioTrade** and academic partners in Calabria, Italy, to co-fund research into efficient and sustainable production
- The P4G (Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030) initiative launched in September 2017 and aims to identify and scale the most effective solutions by funding public-private partnerships and facilitating connections. Countries that have signed on to lead P4G include Chile, Denmark, Ethiopia, Kenya, Korea, Mexico and Vietnam



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