



Photo: Hoang Huy

PRIVATE SECTOR

Engaging corporations in achieving economic and social rights

Globalization and market liberalization have made the power of multinational corporations more noticeable and exposed the limit of national governments' power. These corporations can create unsustainable situations that affect workers and communities in many of the host countries in which they operate. Conversely, the private sector can also positively contribute to peoples' lives. By promoting economic development and generating wealth and prosperity in a sustainable manner, corporations have

the ability to realize a broad range of economic and social rights.

This knowledge has brought Oxfam to an innovative approach towards engaging with the private sector. The impact of businesses that undermine development is what Oxfam would like to see changed: from *do no harm* to *do good and show it*.

// It has now been over a year since we made our commitment on zero tolerance for land grabs. (...). However, it was through Oxfam's campaign on land rights and sugar, in which we gained a greater understanding of the issue and risks. //

– Ed Potter, director of global workplace rights at The Coca-Cola Company.



OXFAM

// Thanks to the Cocoa Improvement Program, I have learned new farming techniques and also understood the importance of pruning my trees. I have seen yields gone up from 2 bags to 4 bags per hectare. //

– Yoshua Akinyemi, participant in the Nigerian cocoa project with Continaf and Ferrero.



Photo: Charles Okereke

PURPOSE

In all work with the private sector, Oxfam aims to advance a social justice agenda. We always stress the rights of people living in poverty and the duty of companies to respect and protect those rights.

PROMISE

The private sector has huge influence and power that can be harnessed positively, but it can also undermine development. Oxfam wants to partner with companies that strive to do business in a sustainable and inclusive manner. When companies fall short of their social responsibility, we will hold them accountable through dialogue, lobby and public campaigning.

PERFORMANCE

Within the confederation, the private sector work of Oxfam Novib primarily focuses on three sectors: 'food, land & water', 'governance & financial flows' and 'conflict & fragility'. In addition, we work across a wide range of private sector actors.

We use consumer mobilization, media exposure and lobby to put pressure on the companies:

- To move companies in a more responsible direction, Oxfam Novib uses consumer activism, publication of rankings and score cards, media exposure and lobby behind the scenes;

- Normative frameworks are used to advance the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agenda. In addition, we support the development of sector wide and commodity specific codes and standards through Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSI).

With the 'frontrunners' we collaborate, undertake joint projects and raise funds:

- We cooperate with companies that are open for constructive collaboration with civil society organizations;
- We cooperate with the private sector and together search for funds by establishing Public Private Partnerships;
- We launched the 'Impact Investment Fund' in order to support small and medium enterprises in developing countries.

PROOF

Through its Private Sector programme, Oxfam Novib achieved several results.

- We engaged with the top ten food and beverage companies through the Behind the Brands Campaign;
- We assisted the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), an MSI ranging from communities to multinationals, and from governments to investors, to develop alternative models involving voluntary self-regulation;

- A 'Poverty Footprint' study has been carried out with Unilever, amongst other companies. This has helped Unilever to improve their operations and find innovative business solutions;
- Oxfam Novib established a partnership with Ferrero and Continaf (Dutch trader) to support 8,000 cocoa farmers in Nigeria achieving higher yields, better quality and improved incomes from cocoa cultivation. This program was co-funded by the ASN Bank. ASN focuses on socially responsible and sustainable investments;
- By setting up a social enterprise in Uganda as part of the Internet Now project, over 600 youth have been employed in microwork and close to 6,000 people have received ICT training.

PLACES

Oxfam Novib engages with the private sector globally, regionally and nationally.

For more information, please visit

www.oxfamnovib.nl/ps
or www.oxfamnovib.nl/en.

Oxfam is a world-wide development organization that mobilizes the power of people against poverty. Around the globe, we work to find practical, innovative ways for people to lift themselves out of poverty and thrive. Oxfam Novib is one of 17 affiliates of the Oxfam confederation, who together work with local partners in 94 countries.

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