Catalyst, Not Hindrance: How Strategic Approaches to CSR and Sustainable Development Can Deliver Effective Solutions for Society’s Most Pressing Issues

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Abstract Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved from businesses having activities rooted primary in philanthropy to a stage where approaches to Corporate Social Responsibility have become strategic. This evolution has led to multinational enterprises being pivotal in solving a selection of pressing societal issues in health, agriculture and the creation of sustainable livelihoods.

Despite the rapid expansion in the number of businesses publishing their CSR and Sustainability reports, progress has been slow and sporadic in businesses across several industries. However, businesses that integrate the three key pillars of sustainable development—social, environmental and economic—provide a foundation on which to build a strategic approach to CSR. Taking an approach informed by sustainability helps businesses have clarity about their purpose. This enables the core business to be in sync with values of the company, internal stakeholders as well as align with expectations of the wider society in which those businesses operate. This shift albeit a gradual one for at least a decade demonstrates how businesses and their stakeholders can drive innovation, future-proof investments and create an enabling environment for enhanced benefits to shareholders as well as other stakeholders.

Drawing on examples from the extractive industry, manufacturing and supply chains for consumer goods, this chapter highlights how strategic approaches to CSR and sustainable development can be effective tools in solving pressing issues in society as well as serve as a catalyst to achieve specific Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, embedding CSR in core business operations improves quality of life and livelihoods in communities as well as strengthens the capability of businesses to apply pragmatic solutions in addressing pressing societal issues.
1 Introduction

Over the past two decades, there has been growing acknowledgement that businesses have responsibilities to their shareholders as well as other stakeholders in society. This is highlighted in several publications, for example, Elkington (1997), WBCSD (2006), Latapí Agudelo et al. (2019), AB InBev (2012). In addition, Kols (2016) in considering the social responsibility of international business observed how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been shaped by businesses taking action on ethical, environmental and social dimensions of their operations.

The literature on CSR is replete with reports of businesses showcasing their various CSR activities (Schwartz and Carroll 2003; Harris 2011; CSR Wire undated; Triple Pundit undated; Kumar 2017). Furthermore, the work of Davidson et al. (2019) quantified monetary spend on corporate philanthropy/CSR by Fortune 500 firms and assessed the influence of materialism by Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) on CSR. Barnett et al. 2019 argued that despite much research since the late 1940s about CSR as practised by companies, there was a paucity of literature about the social impacts of CSR until about 2000. Other studies examined the performance of firms using criteria such as effect of CSR on attraction and retention of employees (WBCSD 2006; Buciuniene and Kazlauskaite 2012; CIPD 2013), explored design and methods in measuring CSR and impacts (Crane et al. 2017) as well as highlighted the shift made by businesses to be more responsive to societal issues. The latter was in contrast to their previous focus of merely debating the ethics of various degrees of social responsibility (Frederick 1978; Cochran 2007) or that the responsibility of businesses to society was to focus on making profits (Friedman 1970). Contemporary society expects businesses to do more than make profits and obey laws. To this end, CSR initiatives by private sector businesses have evolved through voluntary action rather than legislation (Carroll 2015, EC 2011, Newell 2012).

Mattan and Moon (2008) considered implicit and explicit approaches to CSR in their work to develop a framework for comparative analysis of CSR as practised in the United States of America (USA) relative to that practised in Europe. The authors observed that businesses in the USA seemed willing to embrace CSR, a direct contrast to what was perceived as reluctance on the part of businesses in Europe. However since the article by Mattan and Moon in 2008, much has changed and there is evidence of an explosion in the growth of CSR reports by businesses in Europe as well as in other regions of the world. Indeed, many are published on sites such as Greenbiz (undated), CSR wire (undated), Triple Pundit (undated) and Reuters Events (undated). At end of June 2020, over 71,000 reports (from 10,000 plus businesses) were registered on the UN Global Compact’s portal (UN Global Compact 2020).

In this chapter, the author uses examples from the extractive industry manufacturing/food processing and supply chains to demonstrate how strategic approaches to CSR and sustainable development evolved effective tools to solve pressing issues in society. In addition, this article will highlight the considerable potential businesses
have, through their activities, goods or services supplied, to serve also as a catalyst in achieving several of the goals set in the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 (UN 2015).

2 Exploring the Connection Between CSR, Sustainability and Sustainability Development Goals

The connection between CSR and Sustainability is evident through changes made by businesses as they evolved from having CSR with a focus on philanthropy to engagement with CSR initiatives that were congruent with their brand and core business. In part, the shift was driven by considerations arising from adopting frameworks such as a triple bottom line reporting (Elkington 1997), shared-value approach (Porter and Kramer 2011), requirements for supply chain auditing or influenced by perspectives of boards, employees and consumers.

In developing the Sustainable Development Goals agreed in 2015 (UN 2015), consideration was given to the role of business in influencing society and how business actions can have direct positive impacts on progress in achieving given targets under each SDG. This led to businesses being included as stakeholders whose participation is viewed as integral in achieving specific SDGs. This allows business to identify specific SDG(s) aligned with priorities of the business. Such recognition creates opportunities for initiatives made by business at the local level to contribute, as appropriate, in meeting part of larger global development objectives.

As suggested by Witte and Dilyard (2017), the inclusion of business in the SDGs could be viewed as acknowledging their importance in society. Moreover, in a report of the late 2019 simulation event, the Centre for Health Security reiterated that whilst authority needed in a global health pandemic is vested in governments, the resources needed in any such pandemic are held by businesses (Centre for Health Security 2020). This led to a recommendation for the creation of a new international organisation in which governments, businesses, as well as charities, banks and academics can work together to solve the challenges arising from a pandemic (Centre for Health Security 2020).

2.1 CSR

In the early stages of CSR evolving as a concept, the term was used by businesses to describe philanthropic support of ‘worthy causes’, be these donations to charities and communities groups or employees volunteering time, skills and expertise at local schools or senior citizens groups. In the main CSR has been used to refer to non-core activities of a businesses beyond what are their legal obligations. However, because many philanthropic initiatives are unrelated to core business, it is not...
unsurprising there is public perception of CSR by some businesses as thinly disguised marketing and public relations exercises. For example, in considering ‘conditioning branding’ by pharmaceutical firms, Hall and Jones (2008) observed that public health education and awareness raising are reasons given by pharmaceutical companies for discussions about specific pharmaceutical. However, the authors argued that ethical issues arising from such branding can result in the public awareness by pharmaceutical firms being perceived as designed to sell more products.

Another example that seemed to be more about raising brand awareness and increasing sales rather than support for a ‘worthy cause’ is drawn from the global beverage manufacturer Cocoa Cola™ (Digital Synopsis 2014). Combining traditional and innovative digital marketing strategies the company designed a telephone booth (‘Hello Happiness’) to enable migrant workers in United Arab Emirates (UAE) to make telephone calls. Migrant workers could make free three-minute calls to their home countries, using Cocoa Cola™ bottle caps as tokens. As a result of using Coca Cola™ bottle caps in exchange for time on overseas telephone calls to their families, the beverage manufacturer saw a rapid rise in number of new customers in the UAE as well as neighbouring countries (Digital Synopsis 2014).

Increasingly, firms have attributed activities apart from those with philanthropic or social intent to their CSR programme. This has led to a broad selection of issues being grouped under the banner of CSR. These range from the protection of human rights in supply chains so as to prevent exploitation of workers and child labour, environmental stewardship, sustainable use of resources, including biodiversity, carbon off-setting, corporate governance, business ethics through to Human Resource and talent management activities such as inclusion and diversity (Broomes 2014, 2020).

In general, decisions about initiatives selected for inclusion in a CSR programme often reflect priorities and values of businesses. The views of CEOs and boards of directors as well as interests of employees and/or shareholders can be instrumental as well in shaping the final result.

A sample of definitions of CSR from Carroll (1979), ECRC (undated), EC (2011) and ISO (2012) is shown in Box 1.

2.1.1 Drivers of CSR

In addition to internal stakeholders, demands for CSR activities to be more than philanthropy originated from consumers and campaigning groups concerned about issues such as governance and accountability in global corporations and reports of human rights violations (including child labour in factories, people trafficking, modern slavery).

Concerns about issues around ethical sourcing in supply chains have been drivers for CSR and led many to choose to include aspects of this in decisions on procurement. In addition, boards of directors and chief executives were propelled into facilitating the creation of policy statements on CSR or sustainability, formulating
guidelines on minimum standards for factories and commissioning supply chain audits to ensure consistency between policy statements and tangible actions to improve supply chains.

### Box 1 Contemporary definitions of CSR (adapted from Broomes 2014)

“CSR is a means of discussing the extent of any obligations a business has to its immediate society; a way of proposing policy ideas on how those obligations can be met; as well as a tool by which the benefits to a business for meeting those obligations can be identified.”

**Ref:** ECRC (undated). A guide to Corporate Social Responsibility, 12pp.

“The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time.”

**Ref:** Carroll, Archie B. (1979). ‘A Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Performance,’ Academy of Management Review, 1979, 4:4, p. 500.

“CSR is the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society. “To fully meet their corporate social responsibility, enterprises should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders, with the aim of: i) maximising the creation of shared value for their owners/shareholders and for their other stakeholders and society at large and ii) identifying, preventing and mitigating their possible adverse impacts.”

**Ref:** EC. (2011). Corporate Social Responsibility and responsible business conduct.

“Social Responsibility refers to the responsibility of an organisation for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment that, through transparent and ethical behaviour, is integrated throughout the organisation and practised in its relationships, is in compliance with law and consistent with international norms of behaviour, takes into account the expectations of stakeholders and contributes to sustainable development, including health and the welfare of society. Activities include products, services and processes. Relationships refer to an organisation’s activities within its sphere of influence.”

**Ref:** ISO. (2012). Guidelines on Social Responsibility. International Standard Organisation.

### 2.2 Sustainability

Sustainability is built on the three key pillars of sustainable development -social, economic and environment indicators. Businesses can demonstrated the three key
pillars of sustainability through taking a Triple Bottom Line (TBL) approach in the
reporting of business performance (Elkington 1997).

Elkington proposed that businesses should apply social, economic and environ-
mental indicators to measure and monitor success, instead of the traditional single
bottom line of profits only. Moreover, opting for a TBL approach in how a business
operates enables business impacts to be monitored and measured on people, planet
and profits. The TBL approach forms the basis for businesses to report on their
relationship with people (internal and external stakeholders), the planet (biodiversity
and environmental matters) and profits (measuring economic success in use of
production factors).

Embedding sustainability and taking strategic approaches to CSR have helped
companies find purpose, align core business operations with values of the company,
employees as well as expectations of the wider societies in which those businesses
operate. In making the change from philanthropic-driven CSR to one in which
sustainability is at its core provides numerous opportunities for businesses to foster
innovation, future-proof investments create an enabling environment for enhanced
benefits to shareholders and other stakeholders as well as be a catalyst to enable
attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

### 2.3 Sustainability Development Goals

The United Nations SDGs constitute 17 interconnected goals with associated tasks
and activities through which governments and the international community commit
to specific actions to address inequalities and in support of development which
improves lives and livelihoods of citizens around the world (UN 2015).

SDGs are the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),
lunched in 2001 (UN 2000). Over a 15-year period, the MDGs sought to achieve
eight goals, including reduce poverty along with improvements in global indicators
for health, education among other areas (UN 2015, 2017).

Although critised for not having been developed through taking an inclusive
bottom-up approach, a multi-disciplinary review of 90 publications about the MDGs
led to the observation that the MDGs lacked meaningful involvement of represen-
tatives from developing countries, did not specify accountable parties for the various
targets underpinning each of the eight MDGs, were not always adapted to national
needs and ignored development objectives previously-agreed by the countries
(Fehling et al. 2013). Nonetheless, despite shortcomings, the MDGs can be credited
with providing a framework that enabled countries to make inroads in reducing
poverty and hunger by over 50% (as measured by number of people living on less
than 1US$ per day), decreasing by 100 million the number of slum dwellers (Sachs
2012) and improving live chances through access to basic health care (Overseas
Development Institute 2010) and to primary education (UN 2017).

The SDGs have been described as a shared blueprint for developing and devel-
oped countries to achieve peace, prosperity and justice for their peoples through
taking urgent action to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities, improve health and education while simultaneously spurring economic growth and addressing climate change and protecting biodiversity (UN 2015). In addition the SDGs make specific reference to businesses in the agenda for 2030. Indeed, even a cursory appraisal of the aims and objectives behind the SDGs reveal how firms and industries can readily align their vision and mission with specific SDGs such as goals addressing inequalities, climate change and environmental degradation.

2.3.1 SDG and Effect of Post Covid-19 Global Pandemic

In early March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared a global pandemic (WHO 2020) caused by Covid-19 coronavirus. By November 2020, covid-19 had infected 53 million plus people and killed over 1.3 million across the world (John Hopkins 2020).

In view of the extraordinary and widely-publicised measures taken by governments in countries around the world because of the global pandemic that started of late 2019/early 2020, it would be instructive to see how strategies to achieve the SDGs are reviewed and refined. Moreover, communities, businesses and governments around the world need to assess, pivot and adapt as a ‘new normal’ emerges following the devastating impact of covid-19 on people’s lives, their communities, livelihoods and the economies of countries. Doubtless some will see it as an opportunity to develop greater resilience to sudden shocks in economies and foster innovation that can deliver urgent solutions to societal challenges. Others in contrast may consider it a time to retreat from partnership working as their focus is on how to survive in the short-term, not address longer-term considerations.

During the annual World Earth Day (21 April 2020), a time when many were working from their homes because of ‘lock-down’ in countries still battling with the Covid-19 pandemic, the responses from a small group business leaders suggested that businesses were already integrating social and environmental issues to inform decision-making (Clancy 2020). Simultaneously, there was optimism among stakeholders groups that Covid-19 could accelerate initiatives by brands to become more aligned with a sustainability agenda (Clancy 2020).

While it as yet unknown, and too soon to predict how many will take the approach of ‘building back better’, it cannot be denied that in the aftermath of the global Covid-19 pandemic, businesses that survive will be reviewing how they do business and identifying ways to do so in a more cost effective, competitive and sustainable way. Simultaneously, more attention may also be directed to raising ‘business profile’ and expanding their reach though cooperation with other stakeholders in working towards achieving specific targets under one or more of the SDGs.
3 CSR: from Philanthropy to Integrating CSR for Sustainability

Over the past 10–15 years, a steadily growing number of businesses have moved away from philanthropic ‘add-on’ type of CSR initiatives to approaches that are closely aligned with sustainability and core business. This shift however was neither rapid nor widespread. This section discusses the evolution of CSR over four phases (described as four generations).

3.1 CSR 1.0 to CSR 4.0: Key Attributes of the CSR Generations

Broomes (2014) proposed CSR as having evolved through four distinct generations or phases.

Beginning with philanthropy (CSR 1.0), then progressing to employee volunteering and community engagement (CSR 2.0), followed by greater emphasis on reporting and start of triple bottom line reporting (CSR 3.0).

In the fourth and final phase, CSR can be characterised as having sustainability at the heart of CSR alongside a focus on purpose-driven CSR and partnership working. In the fourth phase (CSR 4.0), the process creates ‘triple wins’ for business, policymakers and communities (people). What this means is that businesses through their operations have positive impacts on a wide range of stakeholders, not only shareholders. Such businesses can benefit also from business-supportive enabling policies created by governments (national and regional/state) and contribute to improved lives and livelihoods in the communities where those businesses operate.

Communities (geographic locations as well as specific interest groups, such are youth, women) that have secured ‘wins’ through improved livelihoods are more likely to accord social approval to businesses when they contribute to strengthening supply chains and improving small and medium sized enterprises in local communities. In addition, the third set of ‘wins’ will be by policymakers from their creation of the enabling environments in which businesses can thrive and contribute directly by way of tax revenues and in the process facilitate achieving of national and regional/local development priorities as well as specific SDGs.

Characteristics of each of the four phases of CSR, the CSR generations from periphery to mainstream, are summarised in Table 1.

As part of the shift in how CSR is implemented by businesses, there was growing popularity in creating foundations through which businesses could channel finance for the funding of initiatives that were not core to their operations and were considered as a way of ‘giving back’ to society through the framework of CSR. Examples of multi-national businesses with foundations include telecommunication enterprises Vodafone (Vodafone Group plc 2020) and Safaricom (Safaricom Foundation 2019); food processors Nestle (Nestlé Foundation 2019) and Kellogg
In general, foundations are funded from a percentage or fixed amount of profits generated by the business. The funding received is then used to advance and in support of agreed areas of work. Type of projects funded is wide-ranging. This may include support for environmental groups in local communities, funding scholarships, studying problems of nutrition, increasing access to the internet, use of technology and more widespread availability of computers in schools (Triple Pundit undated; Green Biz undated; Cisco 2020 and UN Global Compact 2020).

As CSR becomes integrated in core activities, it is more aligned with the business. This approach is in marked contrast to philanthropic focus of the 1980s and 1990 as Foundations was the preferred channel for businesses to engage with local communities and the wider society.

The generation of CSR 3.0 is associated with a rapid escalation in reporting on CSR in the annual reports of companies. Indeed, thousands of firms report on their CSR and/or sustainability initiatives and are sharing this information online. This approach is in marked contrast to philanthropic focus of the 1980s and 1990 as Foundations was the preferred channel for businesses to engage with local communities and the wider society. Among popular websites where reports are published include CSR Wire (www.csrwire.com); Triple Pundit (https://bit.ly/2XSM8Nx), Green Biz (www.greenbiz.com/) and the UN Global Compact (http://bit.ly/1N9PRM5).

CSR reports prepared by marketing or public relations teams could result in questions about independence and objectivity of business. This is one reason why businesses should choose to move beyond CSR 3.0 and foster the integration of CSR.

### Table 1 Periphery to mainstream: evolving CSR from philanthropy to ‘Triple Wins’

| CSR phase | Descriptions of CSR phases—from periphery to mainstream |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| CSR 1.0   | *Philanthropy: monetary donations, creation of foundations* |
| CSR 2.0   | *Employee volunteering, community engagement* |
| CSR 3.0   | *Inclusive business approaches, growth in CSR Reporting (Triple Bottom Line, Global Reporting Index, United Nations Global Compact), Accountability standard (AA1000AS) for sustainability reporting, ISO 26000 guidelines for Social Responsibility standard.* |
| CSR 4.0   | *Sustainability embedded in core business: strategic CSR, Inclusive Business, Shared Value (business and society with common purpose); leveraging investment and taxation frameworks; aligning with development goals (local, national, international), creating ‘Triple Win CSR’ (this delivers simultaneous benefits to businesses, governments, communities)* |

(WK Kellogg Foundation 2019); oil/petroleum companies Shell (Shell Foundation 2018) and ExxonMobil (ExxonMobil Foundation 2018); technology brands Microsoft (Microsoft 2019) and Cisco (Cisco 2019) and the global news and information services company Thompson Reuters (Thompson Reuters Foundation 2019). The latter has three areas of focus, human rights, media freedom and inclusive economics.
and sustainability into their operations, instead of treating their CSR initiative as an ‘add-on’ to core operations of the business.

Fourth generation CSR enables businesses to deliver longer-lasting, more substantial and higher value impact that include Elkington’s Triple Bottom Line of taking account of profits, people and planet (Elkington 1997). Inclusive business as advocated by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD 2006) has at its core the integration of sustainability into standard business operations.

Another example of how CSR 4.0 could be achieved is by way of the Shared Value construct of Porter and Kramer (2011). The authors assume there is a common purpose and shared value that drive businesses and society. However, although Porter and Kramer’s Shared Value approach to CSR has been adopted by global brands such as Nestlé, the construct of Shared Value has been criticised. For example, Crane et al. (2014) suggested the approach reflected a naivety about business compliance. In addition, the authors argued that its simplistic framework did not recognise tensions inherent in responsible business activity nor the role of corporations in society. Nonetheless, the Shared Value concept can be credited with contributing to corporations reflecting on how best to ensure CSR conveyed the purpose of business and serving as a catalyst for innovations that will offer solutions to pressing societal challenges.

Embodied in the strategic and development-linked approach of CSR 4.0 are opportunities for businesses to leverage their CSR strategies during investment negotiations if business goals are aligned with relevant developmental objectives. CSR 4.0 strategies are capable of linking business priorities with relevant national and local government objectives, and promoting meaningful stakeholder engagement in local communities where these businesses operate. Such businesses are more likely to have capability to integrate key features of CSR 4.0, the so-called ‘Triple Win’ approach to CSR, in a way that will deliver higher returns for shareholders and other key stakeholders.

Application of CSR at the level of CSR 4.0 through a sustainability framework provides a mechanism for partnership working. This in turn can enable businesses to find solutions to societal challenges through engagement with policymakers at national, regional and international levels as well as communities with specific needs and demographics. Such partnership working by businesses, governments and civil society/communities is fundamental to creating ‘Triple Wins from CSR’ (Broomes 2009, 2011). Moreover, this partnership working fosters consideration of how relevant policies can be harnessed by businesses to make meaningful contributions to specific SDGs. This in turn will feed into solutions for some societal challenges in health, education and manufacturing. In the process CSR can be a catalyst in achieving national developmental priorities.
3.2 Integrating CSR Into Business Operations

Businesses in which CSR is focused on philanthropy and employee volunteering (CSR 1.0 or 2.0, as outlined in Table 1) often allocate CSR to Human Resources Management (HRM) and the marketing functions in a business. This could be a contributory factor to the scope of CSR in the businesses being broadened to cover diversity and inclusion, increasing access to employment and employability of disadvantaged and less socially mobile groups in society through internships and similar work placements opportunities.

Notable examples of brands that have diverted from a philanthropic focus to integrating sustainability across the business are Marks & Spencer (M & S) with its Plan A (M & S 2020) which focuses on its supply chain, and Unilever with its sustainable living plan (Unilever undated) and innovative computer games (Lampikoski et al. 2014). In the case of M & S, the business has set significant targets to become more efficient in use of natural resources and energy by 2025. In addition, savings of over £700 million have been made already by the business could be attributed to the approach of integrating sustainability principles into its decision making (M & S 2020).

It is only when the actions of businesses go beyond their legal obligation that businesses can be considered as truly adding value to communities and societies where they work though initiatives which extend into the social and environmental spheres. Moreover, there is greater likelihood of longer-lasting benefits to shareholders as well as other stakeholders. when such actions are not merely short-term initiatives but integrated into operations of the business and, encompass the three pillars of sustainable development and sustainability.

4 Integrating CSR and Sustainability to Solve Pressing Societal Issues

This section presents an overview of three societal issues to which strategic approaches to CSR and integrating sustainability into business operations resulted in solutions that delivered benefits to businesses, communities and policymakers. The societal solutions addressed health, agriculture and labour exploitation in supply and value chains for fast moving consumer goods and commodities.

4.1 Mining Companies Acting to Reduce Mortality and Morbidity: Benefits for Workers and Families

During the 1990s when there were high numbers of infections from Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
The high level of infections of HIV, deaths from AIDS and resultant devastation in communities in Sub-Saharan Africa led to a societal problem of loss of bread winners in households and many children with life changing experiences following the loss of one or both parents. The societal problem affected multiple generations and not only economically active adults.

Against this backdrop, mining companies in countries whose employees and their families were directly affected by HIV infections and ensuing Aids epidemic were forced to act. Action taken by mining companies, for example, Ango American plc, resulted in benefits to then current employees, staff as well as families and communities in which the miners lived (Cauvin 2002; George 2006). Often these communities were not in the immediate vicinity of the mine but in remote locations to which employees travelled to when returning to their home village and visiting their families (Ellis 2007; Meyer-Rath et al. 2015).

4.1.1 Access to Anti-Retroviral Drugs and Global Funds for AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis

The solution found and decision taken by mining companies to stem the loss of lives from AIDS was to fund and facilitate the supply of anti-retroviral drugs to employees, their families and communities in countries where the company operated. In many countries, the decision of mining companies resulted to access to anti-retroviral drugs well in advance of governments responding in a tangible way to arresting the public health crisis (Cauvin 2002; Ellis 2007; Hoen et al. 2011).

It can be argued that mining firms had a vested interest and had taken action because they needed to ensure availability of a ready pool of economically active miners for their operations so as to generate profits from which dividends can be paid to shareholders. What cannot be disputed however is that the collective action taken in providing access to anti-retroviral drugs saved tens of thousands of lives (Ellis 2007; Carter 2002). Moreover, their actions paved the way and laid the foundation for establishment in 2002 of the Global Fund for AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis as well as opened the doors to giving focused attention to diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria (Global Fund undated). The Global Fund is now an international partnership designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics.

Actions taken by mining companies to reduce devastation from AIDS led not only to fewer AIDS-related deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa but improved the life chances of people infected with HIV in countries around the world (Carter 2002; Hoen et al. 2011). In addition, subsequent partnership working at a global level led to more resources, expertise and funding being used in research on diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis which caused mortality and morbidity in infected people. Previously these diseases were largely neglected and treated as low priority in attracting funding for research (Global Fund undated).
4.2 Business, Human Rights and Modern Slavery in Global Supply Chains

Global businesses operating across multiple jurisdictions employ millions of workers in their supply chains. This means these businesses have a duty of care to employees and a social obligation to ensure suppliers are not operating in a way that causes harm through poor health and safety practices, use of forced labour or employing children (UNHCR 1966, article 7).

Inhumane treatment of workers has been highlighted in reports by media organisations as well as non-government organisations. For example, in the 1970s, supply chains linked with Nike™ became infamous for inhumane conditions in factories in Asia that used migrant workers to manufacture high-priced goods that were sold in advanced economies (Bhatnagar et al. undated). The lessons learnt by Nike™ in Vietnam were applied subsequently in the creation of a code of practice to improve conditions of factories that were contracted as external suppliers to Nike™ (Lund-Thomsen and Coe 2015). However, as observed by Voiculescu (2011), the role of global companies as guardians of human rights has been controversial.

4.2.1 Exploitation in Global Supply Chains

Since the mid-1970s, global brands manufacturing consumer goods in substandard ‘factories’ in developing countries have been the subject of public outcry and negative publicity because of exploitative practices in supply chains in Asia, Latin America and Africa (Lund-Thomsen and Coe 2015; Picciotto 2003; Adams et al. 2004). Brands have disassociated their businesses from suppliers whose factories are substandard with sweat shop conditions and where workers are subject to abuse and low wages, be they children, women or men. However, despite decades of human rights abuse in supply chains, it was only relatively recently that CSR or sustainability strategies have emerged as having potential to be applied in systematic ways when tackling the scourge of human rights abuses in global supply chains.

4.2.2 Indicators of Effectiveness of CSR in Supply Chains

In a review of CSR performance in sustainable supply chain management in Europe, van Opinnen and Oldenziel (2011) identified five key indicators to measure and monitor effectiveness of CSR in the supply chains of 22 companies manufacturing cotton garments, sugar (from sugar cane) and mobile phones.

These indicators were: child labour, freedom of association and collective bargaining, adequate standard of living, unfair price levels and biodiversity. However, in none of the supply chains was there evidence that CSR had been effective in reducing malpractices in areas such as child labour and freedom of association. Moreover, as highlighted recently by Le Pors (2020), major global brands continue
to have reports of human rights abuse in their supply chains. Brands such as Carlsberg (breweries), fashion brand Ralph Lauren (fashion) Starbucks (coffee chain) were among those rebuked by 176 institutional investors about failures to respect human rights in the brands' supply chains (Le Pors 2020). These findings suggest that reliance should not be placed only on voluntary measures in seeking to remove human rights abuse from supply chains.

Nonetheless, improvements have been made since the publication of van Opijnen and Oldenziel (2011). This includes addressing better working conditions in factories, removal of sweatshops from supply chains of major brands, reducing instances of child exploitation in supply chains and auditing of first and second tier suppliers (Anon 2020). However, more remains to be done to eradicate exploitation in supply chains.

### 4.2.3 Initiatives to Reduce Exploitation in Supply Chains

Measures to prevent exploitation in supply chains is an example of a societal issue to which businesses have found solutions and governments created the enabling environment. Solutions include the creation and sharing of best practice guides in supply chains for agricultural commodities, fashion industry and other consumer goods. Moreover, there is heightened awareness about modern slavery in work situations in developing countries as well as in western economies. In the UK, concerns about modern slavery led to enactment of legislation in 2015 (UK Home Office 2015). The act which deals with slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour, human trafficking also makes provision for protection of victims.

In the UK, under the Modern Slavery Act (UK Home Office 2015) and accompanying regulation (UK Crown 2015) it is mandatory for businesses with revenues in excess of £36 million to report of performance of their supply chains. In 2019 almost three-quarter of companies had complied with submitting their report (Transparency in Supply Chains Platform 2019). However, a review of those statements indicated that 90.7% of modern slavery statements failed to meet the minimum requirements of the UK's Modern Slavery Act.

Under the Modern Slavery act, there are four parts to the reporting process that businesses need to follow in reporting how their supply chains are performing. The UK Home Office's document provides specific guidance on each of the four parts, namely how to: (a) writing a slavery and human trafficking statement, (b) structure of the statement, (c) process for approving a statement and (d) publishing that statement as part of the requirement for transparency in performance of supply chains (UK Home Office 2015).
4.2.4 Measures to Reduce Exploitation in Supply Chains: Voluntary and Mandatory

Auditing of supply chains, implementation of best practice for ethical trading and financial penalties are among the measures used to reduce abuses in global supply chains. In addition, because of reputation risk and brand damage, Harris (2011) observed that businesses choose to improve conditions in supply chains rather than dealing with adverse publicity and subsequent brand damage as a consequence of reports of human rights abuses.

Reuters Events: Sustainable Business, known previously as the Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI) and Sedex are service providers working in cooperation with their members to raise standards and improve best practice for working conditions in global supply chains (Reuters Events undated, Anon 2020). In early 2020, for example, Sedex had a membership of over 60,000 organisations from 35 industry sectors, and spread across 180 countries (Anon 2020). Sedex, ETI and similar organisations can play pivotal roles in helping businesses to eliminate human rights abuses in their supply chains.

In addition to voluntary sector supply chain audits, making it mandatory for businesses to assess social impacts as a condition of accessing investment finance is another way in which corporate behaviour can be influenced in the way their supply chains are operated. For example, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) requires businesses to assess social impacts, and as necessary, undertake Human Rights Due Diligence to guard against human trafficking, forced labour, child labour by borrowers and their primary suppliers (IFC 2012).

4.2.5 United Nations Framework on Business and Human Rights

It can be argued that social auditing and applying basic principles of ethical trading in supply chains have been effective in reducing the scourge of human rights abuses. These approaches have contributed also to circumventing the activities of groups involved in modern slavery across supply/value chains of commodities and consumer products destined for sale to customers in western countries.

Of great significance however in raising awareness and deepening understanding of the importance of human rights considerations in global supply chains has been the publication in 2011 of the United Nations Framework on Business and Human Rights (Ruggie 2011). Authored by Professor John Ruggie, this framework sets out key obligations of businesses as well as outlines a process to reduce opportunities for human rights violations in supply chains. The landmark Business and Human Rights Framework document of 2011 sought also to foster greater scrutiny of supply chains. Moreover, with establishment in 2011 of the Working group on issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, the United Nations through its Human Rights Council provided a specific point of focus to
promote and disseminate information about the Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights (OHCHR 2020).

The principles embedded in the three broad pillars underpinning the framework are: (i) protect, (ii) respect and (iii) remedy. ‘Protect’ and ‘Respect’ relate to human rights and ‘Remedy’ becomes necessary when measures to protect fail (Ruggie 2011). Businesses can choose to embrace the framework and voluntarily apply its principles to their operations. This in turn created a forum for the identification and promotion of best practice and sharing of lessons learnt.

Not only does the framework provide guidelines applicable to the process of auditing of supply chains, it also facilitated reporting supply chain performance by businesses as well as contributed to the emergence of policies and statements about modern slavery in supply chains. In addition, policy makers have since strengthened legislation to signal intolerance for human rights abuses in business. For example, in the UK, legislation on modern slavery was enacted to enable prosecution of modern day slave traders (Home Office 2015).

5 Improved Livelihoods Through Processing Local Raw Materials

In this section, a case study is used to demonstrate how the actions of a business contributed to improving livelihoods in farming communities and in the process contributed to reducing poverty (SDG 1).

This case study is based on actions and approaches taken by the South Africa global brewery (known then as SAB Miller). Over the years, the business has committed to source half of the raw materials used in beer making from over 21,000 small holder farmers across Uganda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia (SAB Miller 2011).

SAB Miller’s activities in Uganda had a direct impact on improving income in farming households and reducing the extent of poverty in farming communities. This was achieved through creation of a ready local market for sorghum, barley and maize. The company, now part of ABIn-Bev (2018) since 2016 was significant in finding local solutions to the societal issue of poverty and food insecurity among subsistence farmers in Uganda.

Through facilitating the use of local raw materials in its brewery (manufacturing beers), farmers benefited from SAB Miller’s support to make improvements to agronomic practices and strengthen record keeping skills in farming households. In addition, indirect positive impacts were had from the creation of off-farm jobs as reported in the study by INSEAD Business School (SAB Miller 2011). In Uganda, the brewery supported a further 44,000 off-farm jobs in the wider economy (SAB Miller 2011). Furthermore, through purchase of local crops for commercial beer making in Rwanda and other African countries, SAB Miller created 100,000 farming jobs in Africa (CSR Wire undated).
It could be argued that SAB Miller actions and the decision to use local raw materials in its breweries were driven by enlightened self-interest. That may well be the case. What is clear, however, is that the business advanced not only the interests of its shareholders, but other key stakeholders in host countries. In so doing, the business demonstrated it had positive impacts on poverty reduction and improving the livelihoods of its small holder farming partners and their households. There was indirect positive impact on communities in which members of those farming households lived.

5.1 Creating ‘Triple Wins’ Through CSR

Through engagement with local suppliers in countries where its subsidiary breweries were located, SAB Miller earned social approval and the licence to operate in those countries. A situation described as demonstrating the institutionalisation of CSR (Carroll 2015). Moreover, as well as integrating of CSR and sustainability in core operations of the business, the firm was able to generate ‘triple wins’.

In the example of SA B Miller in Uganda, the three groups of ‘winners’ were: (i) investor business that secured the supply of locally-grown raw material (sorghum) for the operation of its brewery, deliver greater value to shareholders with the fiscal incentive for using local raw materials as well as earning social licence to operate because of jobs created, (ii) policy makers (government) for creating the policy that offered a fiscal incentive for use of local raw materials and iii) farmers (their business and household) benefiting from having a guaranteed market for their sorghum, improving crop husbandary practices on farms, capacity building to improve on-farm record keeping and higher income for farming households.

In solving the societal issue of poverty in communities with households reliant on subsistence farming, SAB Miller contributed to improved lives (social) and livelihoods (economic) in local communities and benefited from the policy of fiscal incentive for use of local raw materials, instead of imported ones (Broomes 2010, 2014).

6 Business, CSR and SDGs: Catalyst to Find Solutions to Societal Issues

CSR can be used to demonstrate how businesses are contributing to society, beyond what is required for compliance. As reiterated by others, meaningful engagement by businesses is pivotal in making progress towards achieving several of the SDGs (Zagelmeyer and Sinkovics 2019; Witte and Dilyard 2017; Schönherr et al. 2017). Indeed, SDG 12, which focuses on responsible consumption and production requires concerted actions from business. Moreover, best practice will emerge as more firms,
including multinational enterprises, adopt and integrate sustainable practices in their operations, including the supply chains.

Using current SDG goals as indicators, the case study given earlier of the SAB Miller brewery in Uganda (and its successor holdings AB InBev) would have contributed to four of the SDGs, 1, 8, 10, 11 and 17. Through improving livelihoods and higher household incomes, SAB Miller contributed to SDG1 (poverty eradication).

Development of vibrant farming businesses for small holding farmers, instead of subsistence farming would have been a direct contribution to SDG8 (decent work and economic growth) and to SDG 10 by way of reducing inequalities between households in sorghum farming communities, as well as off-farm, through creation of sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11). Furthermore partnership working (SDG 17) was evident in the way business engaged with communities and benefited from relevant policies. Furthermore, it is highly likely that the partnership would have contributed to SDG 3 as a result of improved health and well being with greater food security and SDG 3 through improved/better access to education.

In suggesting new areas for academic research to examine how firms can contribute to SDGs, Witte and Dilyard (2017) considered types of policies that would be supportive of business innovation. The authors implied that SDGs will be viewed as stand alone goals that are then introduced to the operations of the business. In practice, however, the initial step should be that of businesses identifying which SDGs are relevant to what they are doing. In this way metaphorical doors can be opened through which businesses can identify opportunities for their products or services to be effecting in solving pressing societal issues.

The absence of suitable products or services to solve societal issues that is highlighted by any of the 17 SDGs represent opportunities for firms to innovate in their respective industry and bring to the market products or services to solve selected societal challenges. Furthermore, it can be argued that it is the need for solutions to problems that have driven innovation rather than specific stand alone policies.

Human rights abuses in global supply chains, including modern slavery, is one of the more pressing societal issues of the twenty-first century. If businesses, law makers and civil society organisations work in partnership (SDG 17), they can cooperate to implement solutions that will eradicate the scourge of human rights abuses in supply chains through improved best practice and enforcement of penalties for infringements. Businesses would then be well placed to make significant contributions to more than half of the SDGs. Examples of relevant targets include ensuring responsible production and consumption (SDG 12), promoting industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9) as well as make direct contributions to poverty alleviation (SDG1) through opportunities for decent work and enhanced economic growth (SDG8). Moreover, this would result in the development of sustainable communities and cities (SDG 11), foster good health and well-being (SDG 3), enhance gender equality (SDG 5) and reducing inequalities (SDG 10).
7 Closing Summary

This chapter shared case studies of three societal problems to which solutions were found through strategic approaches to CSR and integrating sustainability into business operations. The solutions found either created benefits or reduced harm caused to individuals and groups in society. The societal solutions addressed health, agriculture and labour exploitation in supply and value chains for fast moving consumer goods and commodities.

Significant gains can be made when interventions of business are guided by approaches grounded in CSR or sustainability. This in turn could result in finding solutions to societal challenges such as those identified in the SDGs. Nonetheless, much remains to be done. These include measures addressing societal issues arising from i) health access inequalities and fragility of systems for health care delivery and research, ii) inefficiencies in use of energy resources, iii) lack of opportunities to create sustainable livelihoods because current ones are at risk or have been damaged as a result of the adverse impacts of global climate change as well as iv) eradicating human rights abuses in global supply chains.

With changes to the perception of multi-national enterprises and their expected role in operating as responsible corporate citizens, businesses have countless opportunities to promote innovation. This can be done through finding solutions for issues of profound importance that threaten the societies in which they operate while ensuring such innovation does not adversely affect profitability and payment of dividends to shareholders. It can be argued that social or societal obligations of businesses are pivotal to ensuring their long-term survival as well as in gaining social licence to operate and trade in a globalised world. Irrespective of jurisdiction, companies are required to comply with laws on governance, financial reporting, duty of care, labour laws, health and safety and environmental protection.

Formulation of relevant developing policies and strengthening partnership working will enable businesses to make greater contributions through their goods and services that solve pressing issues. To achieve this outcome will require a paradigm shift in how businesses treat with CSR and sustainability. Is it viewed as a necessary add-on in order to be seen as responsible corporate citizen or a vehicle to raising brand awareness? Or, alternatively, is it a genuine effort to foster a culture of decision-making informed by assessments of value, measured not only in terms of profits for the business, but effects on the environment (planet) and society (people)? Moreover, each business should identify which of society’s most pressing needs can be solved through use of its own products or services, including those not yet developed.

In addition, creating opportunities for policy changes supportive of innovation in businesses and simultaneously finding solutions to pressing societal issues could include the:

- Fostering strategic and innovative approaches when revising investment frameworks and negotiation agreements.
• Applying principle-based frameworks such as the UN Global Compact to show how businesses have integrated sustainability into core operations and which specific society issues have been or are being addressed.

• Mapping core operations and activities of business to specific SDGs and set measurable targets to monitor and review progress.

Creating relevant policies and incentives to promote and reward innovation beyond standard business practice will open opportunities for business to be catalysts in finding solutions to some of society’s most pressing issues. In this way, policies and incentives can link innovative actions with specific national development priorities and objectives and/or targets to achieve specific SDGs. Therein lies the potential for voluntary actions from businesses which take account of social and/or environmental issues beyond those mandated by the laws in each country. Building on a voluntary-led CSR platform can result in wins for businesses, governments and communities.

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A dynamic, resourceful and experienced professional who has worked at the interface of research, consulting and training/lecturing, Veronica served as a part-time lecturer to postgraduate students in the Human Resources Management master’s degree programme at the University of Coventry in England. More recently, in late 2019, she was appointed as an associate lecturer in the School of Applied Social Studies at the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, Scotland. Her consultancy work has included research on sea-level rise and Commonwealth Island States, conduct of sustainability audits for businesses, environmental and social impact assessments for agricultural, infrastructure and forestry projects and evaluating grant funding applications for waste and food projects.

Having written widely on CSR, sustainability and associated topics for over 15 years, her publications include articles on CSR and the links with Governance, Human Resources and in leveraging inward investments. Her book *Who Invests Wins: Leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility for CEOs, Investors and Policymakers to Create ‘Triple Wins’* provides insights into how CSR can be used strategically to create wins for CEOs, investors and policymakers. In 2013, she launched the first ‘State of CSR’ survey. It aimed to find out both what organisations across various industries were doing in CSR as well as inviting views on the future of CSR.

She has made meaningful contributions, including conference presentations and scholarly articles, to discussions about environment, social and governance (ESGs) in the decision-making process of investors and CSR as a catalyst for achieving development objectives in Commonwealth countries. Her early career was in agricultural research in Guyana where she worked as a plant tissue culture specialist/biotechnologist and established the national facility for plant tissue culture. As a part-time lecturer at a specialist further education college, Dr Broomes contributed to updating the botany curriculum as her lectures covered topics of agriculture biotechnology, biodiversity and climate change, including sea-level rise and implications of then contemporary issues for agriculture.

She is an affiliate member of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) and former head of its Guyana Chapter. She supports the startup and growth of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through her contributions as a Volunteer Speaker with the Corporation of London’s City Business Library, Portobello Business Centre in London and the Business and IP Centre at the Sheffield Central Library. In Sheffield, she volunteers also with the Sheffield Sustainability Network where she is an active member in its working groups on:

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She has worked in the UK and internationally, holds a Masters of Law (LLM) degree from The Open University, PhD in Plant Science from University of Sheffield and postgraduate certificate in Environmental Impact Assessment from University of London.