



Survey of civil society leaders on the role of corporations in delivering social impact

May 2013



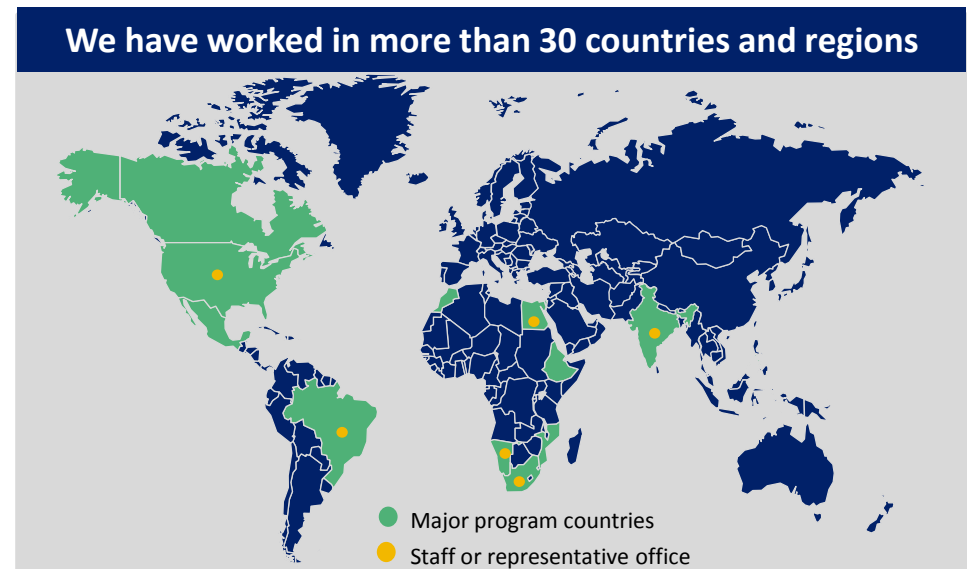
About Synergos



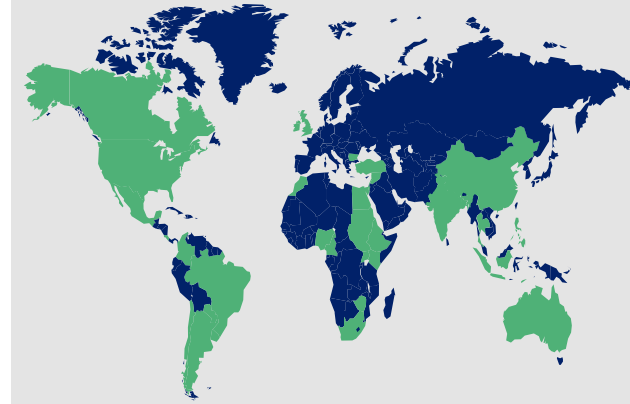
- **Established over 25 years ago, Synergos is a nonprofit working with partners in business, government and civil society to fight poverty around the world.**
- Synergos has supported **innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships in more than 30 countries** to define sustainable solutions around healthcare, education, women and children protection, nutrition and agribusiness. Synergos manages **global networks of about 800 individuals** ranging from philanthropists, civil society leaders and social entrepreneurs and supports various corporations and governments around the world.
- We are headquartered in New York with regional offices in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.



- **Synergos Consulting Services is the consulting arm of Synergos. We help companies advance both corporate and social interests and build sustainable business practices into core business models**
- We serve our clients by combining best practices from international development and management consulting in order to help clients design CSR and social impact strategies, implement innovative solutions, define a stakeholder engagement strategy, build stronger relationships with governments, civil society, and local communities, set impact measurement systems.
- We have had extensive experience working with companies in the food and beverage, agribusiness, pharmaceutical, personal care, and extracting sectors.



The Synergos Senior Fellow Network has access to a global perspective based on local expertise



144 Senior Fellows operating in over 50 countries

Senior Fellows

- Launched in 1999, the Senior Fellows (SF) Network is comprised of **144 distinguished civil society leaders from more than 50 countries**, selected based on their social impact and their commitment to collaborative efforts that address the underlying causes of poverty and inequity.
- The network aims to strengthen the capacity and opportunities for these leaders to play a major catalytic role in **partnerships that address the systemic causes of poverty and promote sustainable social change.**

Focus Areas

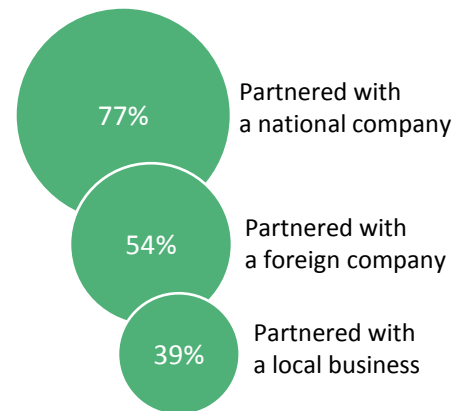
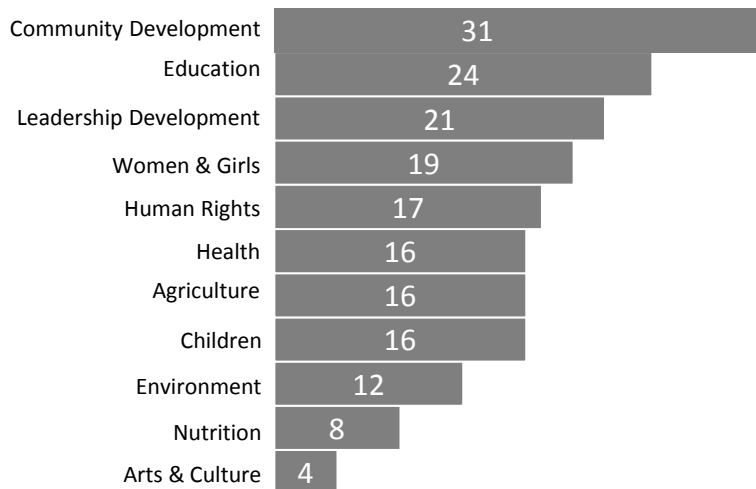
Surveyed Senior Fellows represent organizations operating in a number of areas that have a social impact.

Cross-Sector Experience

Fellows have extensive experience in engaging in partnerships with private companies.

Senior Fellows' organizations active in Given Area

% Senior Fellows who have partnered with a company



Fellows at the 2012 meeting at the Dead Sea in Jordan

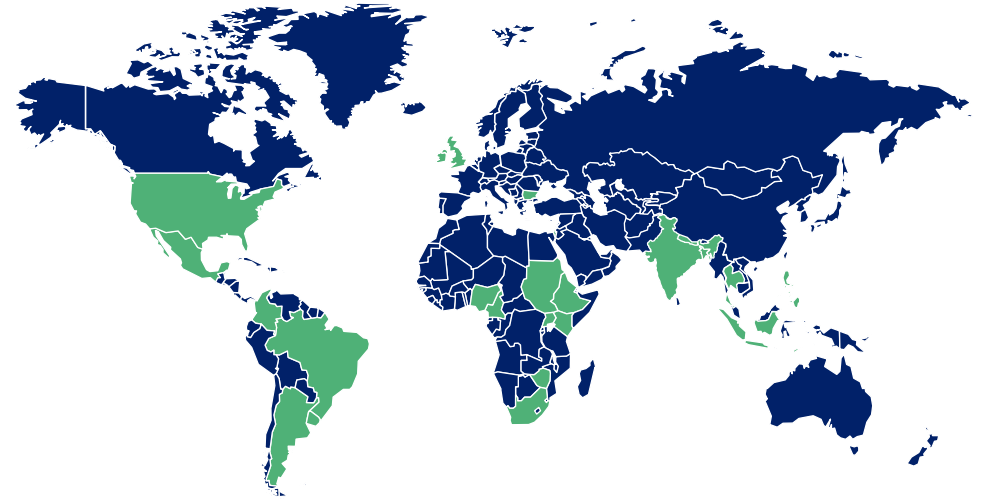
Snapshot

- Brazil SF, Class of 2013: Founder of an organization working with farmers and chefs in Brazil to preserve heritage, agriculture, and food quality
- Cameroon SF, Class of 2012: Civil society leader promoting human rights, good governance, health and AIDS prevention, and socio-economic empowerment of women, widows and orphans.
- Mexico SF, Class of 2012: Founder and Executive Director of a capacity building organization with the mission of contributing to Mexico's social development by strengthening civil society organizations, advocacy coalitions, grant makers and policies for enabling civil society to grow

We surveyed the Senior Fellows in order to gather local insights on the role that corporations play in delivering social impact

About the Survey

- The aim of this survey was to gain insight from Civil society leaders in emerging markets into the capacity of private companies to establish partnerships that enhance the delivery of social impact.
- This survey garnered the feedback of 50 Fellows, representing 27 countries and organizations working in areas such as education, community development, leadership development, healthcare and agriculture.



Key Findings

- With the escalation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs, **civil society's perception of private companies has seen marked improvement** – particularly for international firms. This improvement is **magnified when the company engages honestly and transparently with the communities in which it operates**. However, their efforts still remain viewed with some level of **scrutiny** by local partners.
- Short-term commitment as well as the absence or ineffective use of communication with communities and partners is a leading **impediment to successful corporate initiatives** and contributes to the belief that private companies are not yet equipped to form functional partnerships.
- **Financial assets** are ranked as the most valuable resource companies can offer to potential partners; however, simply making donations is **not enough** to gain the trust of local partners. Trust can be established by actively engaging with the partners as well as the community.
- The importance placed upon achieving sustainable impact is highlighted by the fact that **expertise, training and access to technology** – after financial assets – are **among the most important resources companies** can offer when engaging in partnerships.



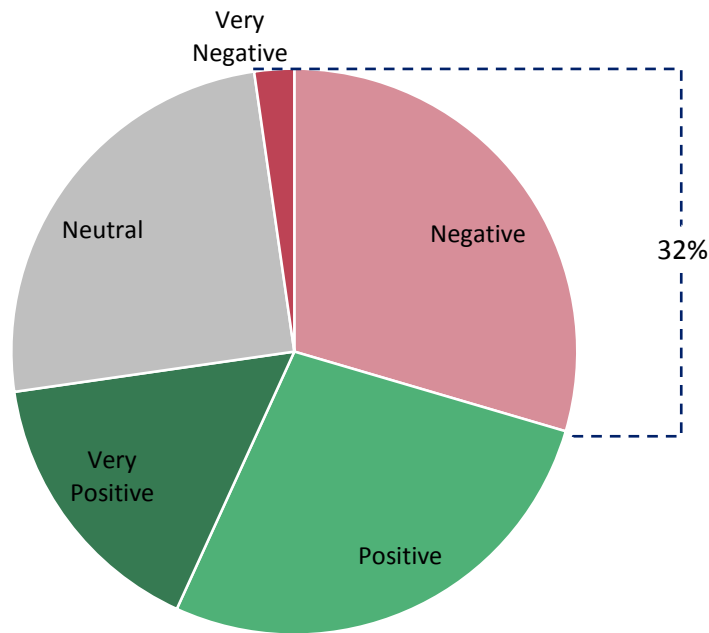
Senior Fellows meeting in India

Effective CSR programs have improved civil society's perception of private companies but still remain viewed with scrutiny

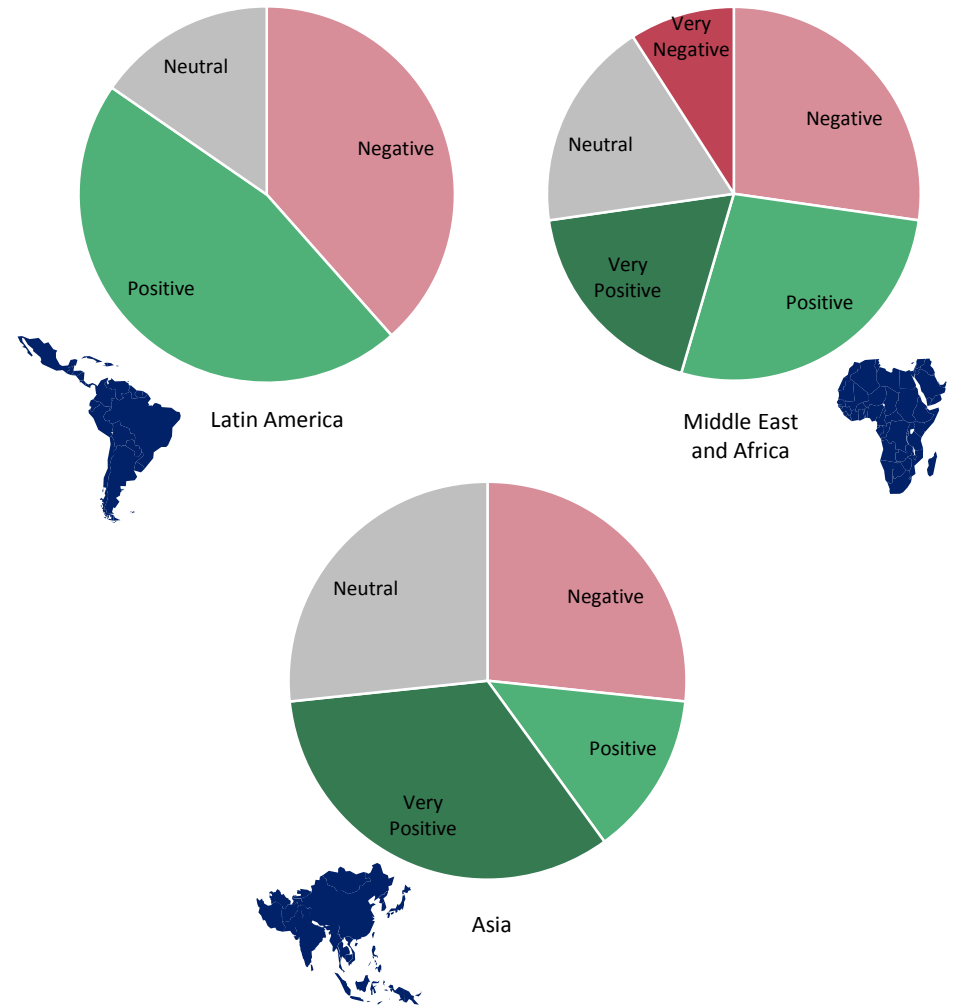
Corporate Perception

With respect to the societal impact (job creation, social programs, labor practices, ethic, innovative services with social impact...), what is the overall view of citizens and civil society leaders about companies operating in your country?

Aggregated



Regional

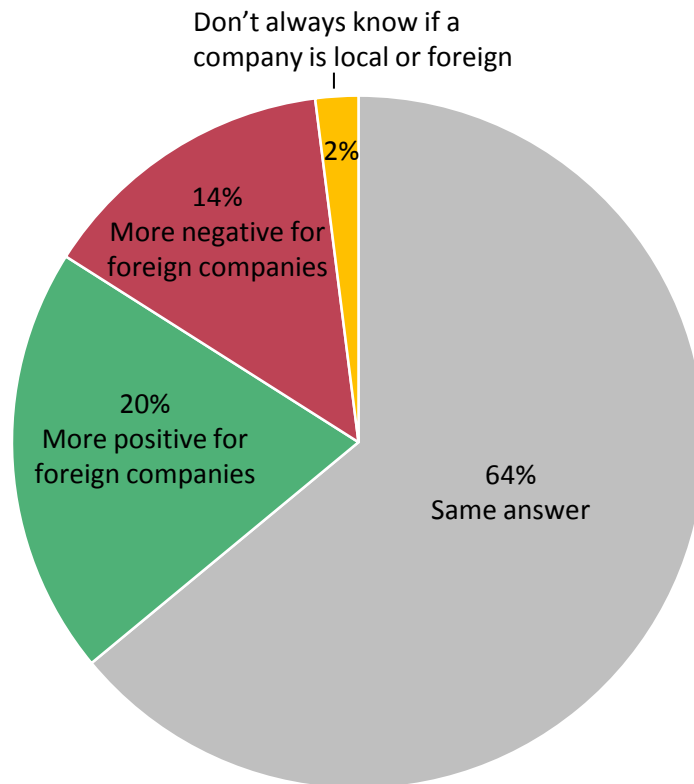


- “Years ago, the answer would have been negative. However, corporations have started corporate foundations and other initiatives that [...] have made the efforts of the private sector more acceptable to the general public.”
- “CSR is being practiced by a growing number of companies. Many have good programs, but their reach is quite limited.”
- “Most CSR is looked at as 'brand building' and not genuinely about the empowerment of marginalized communities “

Foreign companies may be viewed as capable of offering more to communities than their local counterparts, but their actual impact is still questioned by the civil society

Corporate Perception (cont'd)

Would your answer to the previous question differ for foreign companies instead of local companies?

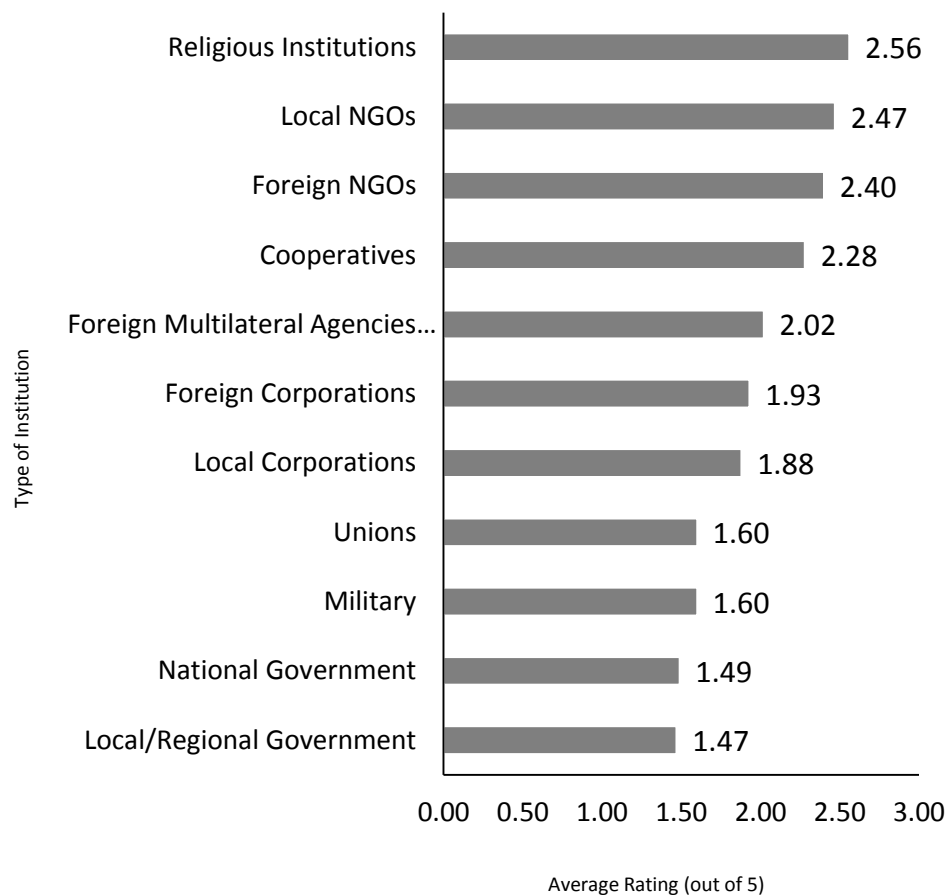


- "Some foreign companies have demonstrated more **responsibility and sincerity.**"
- "Large, foreign companies sometimes have more **sophisticated strategies** than locals. People notice that."
- "Foreign companies are viewed to be **more distant (and hence less caring or concerned)** from the issues as they operate in joint ventures with Indian firms."
- "**Foreign companies** have received a lot of **coverage for CSR related activities** but are also known as the **party responsible** for a lot of **environmental degradation.**"
- "It is difficult to answer this question because some foreign companies may seem to do well but **their labor practices and ethical conduct** is questionable."
- "Foreign companies do not implement the same community support programs that they have in their own countries."

Institutions that have a vested, non-financial interest in the communities in which they operate are more likely to be trusted

Institutions and Trust

How would you rate the level of trust towards each of the following institutions from the citizens of your country? (answers are ranked from most trusted (5) to least trusted (1))

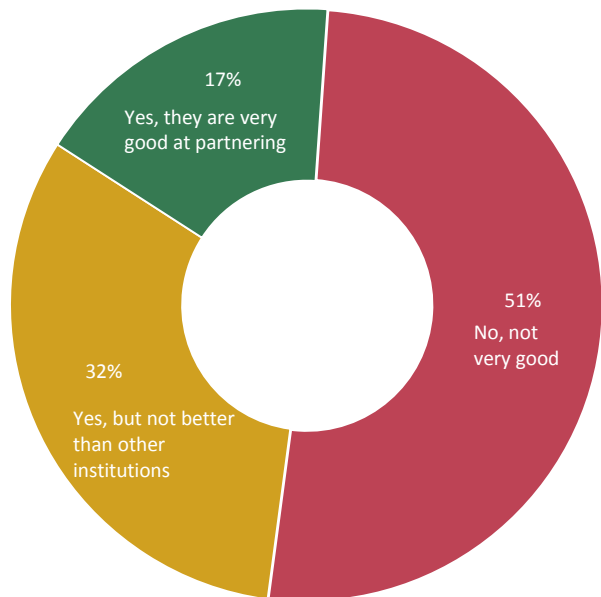


- “**Corruption** and years of **unfulfilled promises** and **poor governance** make governments **less trustworthy**. There is often **misplaced trust on the international community** to help (i.e. UN, WB), but when nothing changes, citizens’ hopes on these institutions diminishes.”
- “Everything local is designed to **secure the interest of the long-standing regime**. Thanks to Foreign institutions, the lives and economy of citizens have been greatly improved.”
- “Some questions are not easy to answer in a situation where even those corporations and other institutions are not functioning properly.”

Ineffective communication and lack of commitment, among others, contribute to the belief that private companies are not skilled at forming functional partnerships

Building Partnerships

Do you think corporations do a good job, in your country, partnering with other institutions to support development activities in your country?

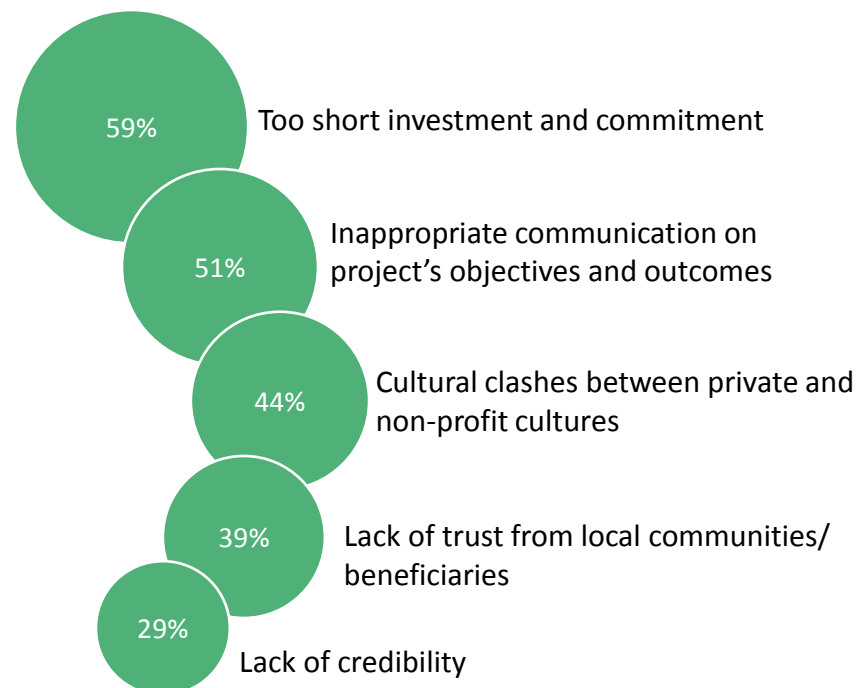


If you were considering forming a partnership, would you know how to proceed?



Impediments to Corporate Initiatives

In your perception, what are the most important obstacles companies face when engaging in initiatives to benefit society?



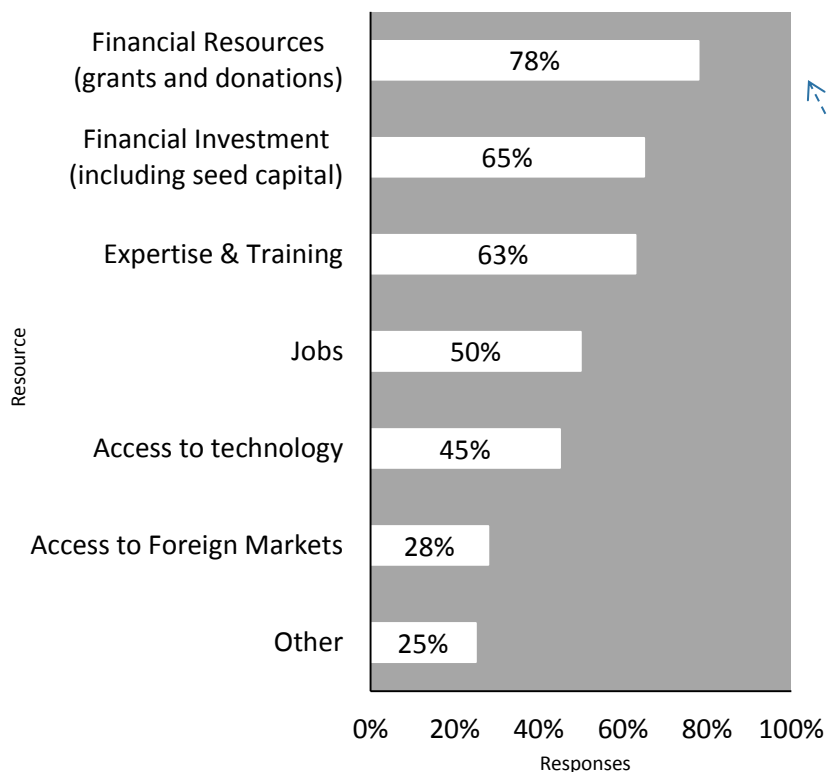
Other Obstacles

- "Lack of sincerity"
- "Corruption"
- "Misplaced motives"
- "Lack of senior leadership interest"
- "All of the main stakeholders are fragmented. We need to collaborate across sectors."

Companies' financial assets are important to their potential partners; however, firms must go beyond simple donations to gain the trust of local allies

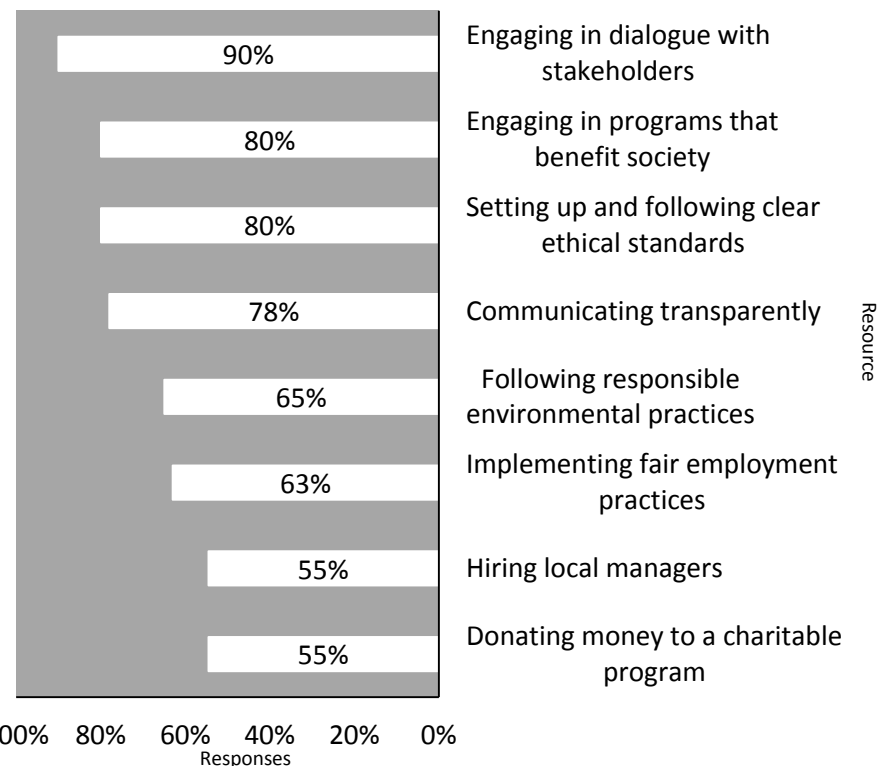
Corporate Offerings

The THREE most important resources that a partner would value in a company?
(answers ranked from most important (1) to less important (3))



Enhancing Local Partnerships

The most important actions for a company to build trust with local partners?
(answers ranked from most important (1) to less important (7))



Other Important Resources

- "Trustworthy leadership"
- "Embed investment in social change in core business"
- "Use of local resources"

Other Important Attributes

- "Having a long-term view"
- "Being committed to the partnership/cause/impact"
- "Have the right motivation"

Companies can channel their knowledge and resources into programs that support sustainable impact

Targeting Impact

In your area of work, in which three areas do you think companies can generate the most impactful benefit to society? (e.g. consumer education, affordable technology, reliable jobs, workforce training, etc.)

- As captured by the word cloud¹, the consensus on the main areas in which companies can generate the most impact include those **where the private enterprise is able to employ its expertise**, provide resources and support **sustainable systems change**.
- Some of the most frequently used terms were: workforce training, access to affordable technology/healthcare, capacity building and consumer education.



¹ Source: word cloud generated by tagxedo.com
Font size is positively correlated to frequency of appearance in survey results

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