



INSIGHTS SUMMARY

BUILDING AN EQUITABLE AND RESILIENT FUTURE

GLOBAL GOALS / FIRESIDE CHAT / 19 SEPT 2023

We would like to thank the following opening speakers:

Jane Nelson, Director, Corporate Responsibility Initiative, **Harvard Kennedy School**

Michelle Gethers, Chief Diversity Officer & Head of Corporate Responsibility, **Visa Inc**

In a detailed dialogue centred on navigating global challenges, a consensus emerged around the pivotal role businesses play in crafting sustainable solutions. To spearhead meaningful transformations, companies must intricately weave sustainable development goals into their core ethos, championing both individual and community empowerment while also forging transformative, large-scale partnerships.

INSIGHT 1: **EMBED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS INTO CORE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES**

The integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the foundational aspects of business operations isn't just a strategic move – it's a clarion call to the corporate world, signifying a renewed pledge to sustainable and inclusive growth. This paradigm shift does not merely reside in policy documents but is palpably evident in operational nuances. Leading companies are trailblazing paths by incorporating comprehensive inclusion strategies. A salient feature of such strategies is the accentuation of women's roles, not just at leadership echelons but across the organisational spectrum. This confluence of business operations and overarching societal goals forges a harmonised trajectory, intertwining business longevity with societal advancement.

INSIGHT 2: **EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES**

True empowerment is a multifaceted endeavour reaching far beyond the traditional confines of community engagement. At its heart lies the recognition and celebration of every individual's inherent value and distinct identity. Such a perspective forms the bedrock for nurturing environments that value diversity and myriad experiences. Crucial to

We do think that it is important for everyone to have agency over their lives and be able to make decisions for themselves. And so as we think about these alliances, we don't want to take away a community's agency or an individual's agency, even in times of need.

Michelle Gethers, Chief Diversity Officer &
Head of Corporate Responsibility, **Visa Inc**

this is the creation of tangible opportunities – pathways for career progression, platforms amplifying community voices, and unwavering commitments to uphold pay equity irrespective of gender or ethnicity. This robust framework of empowerment catalyses a ripple effect, with empowered individuals becoming the linchpins in sculpting resilient communities and bolstering economies.

I think one of the most important trends we've seen over the last 15 years has been the sort of transition, from the margins to the mainstream, that corporate philanthropy is crucially important, social investment is crucially important – but how do we embed the sort of risks and opportunities of the sustainable development goals into core business?

Jane Nelson, Director, Corporate Responsibility Initiative, Harvard Kennedy School

INSIGHT 3: CRAFT STRATEGIC ECOSYSTEM-LEVEL COLLABORATIONS

While grassroots initiatives are commendable, there's a pressing need for businesses to cast their nets wider, envisioning and crafting collaborations with an ecosystem-wide impact. Addressing the intricate challenges of our times requires holistic, well-orchestrated solutions that magnify positive outcomes. This is manifest in the collaborative endeavours businesses are undertaking – partnerships that transcend traditional boundaries, aligning with organisations that champion broader societal causes. The reverberations of such collaborations are profound, seeding positive change that permeates far beyond the immediate stakeholders.

IN SUMMARY

To envisage and realise an equitable, resilient future, businesses must adopt a trifold strategy, underpinned by sustainability, empowerment, and expansive collaboration. The meticulous integration of SDGs, the zealous drive for empowerment, and the embracement of expansive collaborations collectively serve as the linchpin for ushering in substantial societal enhancements. This approach, while augmenting the business landscape, also etches lasting positive imprints on global communities and ecosystems. In this ethos lies the epitome of forward-thinking leadership – where businesses don't merely navigate but flourish, synchronised with global aspirations.