

A New Agenda for a New Decade

- Abstract of Lord Griffiths' address to Transformational Business Network 14/5/2010

"We need to recapture the vision of tackling global poverty", according to Lord Brian Griffiths. In his keynote address at the 'Transformational Leadership' conference, organised by the Transformational Business Network, Lord Griffiths called for "a new agenda for a new decade".

Whereas 2000-2005 was a time of great hope for poverty reduction, the financial crises since 2008 has changed the landscape considerably as the aim to reduce poverty has moved down the global agenda.

The 'new agenda for a new decade' should be characterised as follows:

1. The recapturing of the vision of global poverty reduction calls for a coalition of Department of International Development, politicians, NGOs, faith communities, artisans, and business people who all wish to see global poverty reduced and thus have a common cause.
2. Business should take the lead in setting that agenda. The engine of growth constitutes entrepreneurs and business people who are the heart of the market economy. Potential entrepreneurs need to be liberated by the right public policy and seedbed investments, partly provided by government. We already have successful models of public-private investment.
3. Micro finance is an important tool of empowering the poor and lifting them out of poverty. Micro finance is proving successful in lifting people out of abject poverty into normal poverty. It has established the credit worthiness of borrowers which mean that they are more readily eligible for future loans.
4. The next step up from micro finance is social venture capital, or impact investment. Job creation will come significantly from growth in SMEs which are key to economic development. There is a strong case for social venture capitalism, investing in SMEs in developing countries as fighting poverty is best done by creating business ventures which create jobs and empower the poor. SVC is looking beyond profit to social and environmental return.
5. The agenda also centres on physical and spiritual transformation for the world's poor. Communities and social network make up 'social capital'. As individuals we have an innate sense of justice, fairness, ethical standard and life of the spirit. We recognise the importance of spiritual capital in influencing behaviour which accompanies the physical transformation. We are not just concerned in GDP, but in social, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. This should have profound implication for the corporate culture we want to establish in businesses and for the way we hold people in companies accountable.

We need to recapture the vision of fighting global poverty which was prominent 10 years ago. There is evidence of real success in reducing poverty through business, always associated by economic growth, characterised by the vitality of the market economy and the activity of entrepreneurs.

Transformational Business Network has a proven track record in creating jobs and growth. It has a business model that works, that contributes to poverty reduction through business.

With a new UK government claiming 'a new politics', the importance of business in eradicating poverty needs to become an integral part of the much needed coalition aiming to reduce poverty in the next decade.

Audio links to Lord Griffiths talk and other material on 'Transformational Leadership' can be found at <http://www.tbnetworkportal.org/DocumentLibrary/tabid/340/Default.aspx>