A synopsis of the key strategic developments in corporate responsibility around the globe over the last quarter

Glassed: women and CSR

In June, the 18th Global Summit of Women was held in Vietnam. Known informally as the ‘Davos for Women’, the Summit attracted over 900 participants from 72 countries and regions. The list of sponsors for the Global Summit of Women included corporate powerhouses such as Microsoft, IBM, Pfizer and FedEx. Despite the scale of the event, the Summit did not garner international press coverage. An internet search revealed that press materials were limited to major dailies in Vietnam, Malaysia and China. The Summit aims to be a celebration of women’s achievement. In the Opening Address, Irene Navidad focused on how women have the ability to run businesses successfully. ‘41% of Rwanda’s businesses are owned by women,’ she explained. ‘The march of female entrepreneurship from agribusiness to tourism came out of the sad opportunity emerging from the genocide, which left agricultural lands, for example, in the hands of women whose husbands, sons and fathers were slaughtered. To survive, women—many of whom had no training or exposure to managing property or farms—had to take control simply in order for their families to survive. With the help of international agencies which provided training and loans to the women, Rwanda came back to life.’

1 www.globewomen.org
2 globewomen.org/summit/2008/Speeches/Text/Natividad_Opening.htm
rights in Europe after World War II, as women had been depended on in factories and farms during the fighting.

There was disquiet being expressed in some media that progress made in the West over the last decades on women’s rights, as economies had boomed, are falling back, and look likely to slip further due to an economic downturn. ‘So you thought the gender equality cause had come a long way in the last 30 years? Well think again. Not only is gender discrimination in the workplace alive and kicking, it’s actually getting worse,’ argued the British newspaper The Independent in May. It reported on a survey of more than 100 British recruitment agencies, which revealed that 70% had been asked by clients to avoid hiring pregnant women or women of childbearing age. The New York Times then reported that women were being laid off faster in the economic downturn.

How is the corporate social responsibility (CSR) profession addressing gender issues? New research published by the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility (ICCSR) found that the potential role of business as a vehicle to advance women’s issues is often overlooked in corporate responsibility work. In describing the state of CSR and gender equality in the EU, Dr Irmgard Schultz, co-founder of the Institute for Social-Ecological Research (ISOE), states: ‘the potential of CSR to promote EU policy goals for gender equality is hardly recognised by the public’. This was evident in a survey conducted by responsible enterprise consulting firm Lifeworth on ‘Women and CSR’ for this review, which invited current members of the mailing list ‘CSR Chicks’ to share their views. Sixty-four per cent of respondents, who were all female CSR practitioners, stated that their membership of the (gender-specific) network had not led them to think about the role of CSR in women’s advancement before the survey was conducted. Fifty-eight per cent reported that gender issues are ‘not a top priority’ in their organisation’s corporate responsibility efforts, 36% that it is one of the top ten priorities, and 6% that it is one of the top three priorities.

With intergovernmental organisations launching several key gender initiatives in 2008, more corporate responsibility practitioners may awaken to a gender perspective. One such initiative was the Danish government’s launch of the MDG3 Global Call for Action Campaign in the Spring, which urged for gender equality and women’s empowerment to be put higher up in the international agenda. In a symbolic gesture representing the ignition of a global resolve, they planned for more than 100 MDG3 torches to travel around the world as they are passed to representatives of governments, the private sector, civil society, individuals from North and South and international organisations. Responding to the call to ‘do something extra’, intergovernmental organisations have taken on a leading role to facilitate and strengthen advocacy on gender equality. On International Women’s Day 2008, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)’s Development Centre launched Wikigender, an internet portal that aims to foster a bottom-up dialogue on the importance of gender equality. Along with the introduction of the Gender, Institutions and Development Database to determine and

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7 For more information about the aims of the MDG3 Global Call to Action campaign, visit www.mdg3action.um.dk/en/menu/AboutTheCampaign/AimOfTheCampaign.
8 www.mdg3action.um.dk/en/menu/MDG+3+Torch/Torch+Campaign
analyse obstacles to women’s economic development, the OECD aims to fill in the knowledge gap about gender discrimination that is often rooted in social institutions such as norms, traditions and family law.9

Following the OECD’s lead, in June the International Labour Organisation (ILO) embarked on an awareness-raising campaign. Speaking about the year-long ILO Global Campaign for Gender Equality that will lead up to the ILO conference scheduled in 2009 on ‘Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work’, ILO Director-General Juan Somavia stated, ‘although progress is being made, gender equality is still lagging behind in the rapidly changing world of work’. Indeed, despite substantial progress in the closing of the gender pay gap, women are finding out that money and power do not go hand in hand. In the Mastercard Master Index of Women’s Advancement released in March, women in the Asia-Pacific region continue to feel that they are under-represented in managerial positions.10 The survey measured women’s socioeconomic progress according to four indicators. The first two objective indicators are the ratio of female to male participation in labour force and in tertiary education based on source data from national bureau statistics. The remaining two subjective indicators measure female and male perceptions of whether they hold managerial positions and earn above-average income. Their findings that women do not have the same opportunities as men in the workplace corresponded with the ILO report on Global Employment Trends for Women 2008 released in Geneva in the same month. It revealed that, even though more women are working than ever before, they are still clustered in ‘low-productivity, low-paid and vulnerable jobs, with no social protection, basic rights nor voice at work’.11

In Hong Kong in June, Devi Novianti from Christian Action noted there is a particular challenge for domestic helpers, with sexual harassment being a concern. Equal Opportunities Officer Cynthia Lam emphasised that awareness-raising activities, such as training, are key.12

It is problematic that the gender impacts of business operations still register low on the radar of CSR programmes and priorities, given that women are disproportionately affected by social and environmental issues. A report released in April by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on the gender implications of biofuels production asserts that, in light of the increase in food prices, women ‘tend to be particularly exposed to chronic and transitory food insecurity, due also to their limited access to income generating activities’.13 Co-author of the paper Yianna Lambrou said: ‘Unless policies are adopted in developing countries to strengthen the participation of small farmers, especially women in biofuel production by increasing their access to land, capital and technology—gender inequalities are likely to become more marked and women’s vulnerability to hunger and poverty further exacerbated.’

In high-income nations, key gender issues for business centre on women on boards and the related issue of career mentoring and grooming for leadership roles, equal opportunity and diversity management in employment, segregation in

9 The OECD Development Centre website on gender can be accessed at www.oecd.org/document/23/0,3343,en_2649_13935_36255851_t_t_1_1_1,00.html.
10 The survey is available at www.masterintelligence.com/ViewRegion.jsp?hidReportTypeId=4&hidUserId=null.
11 The report is available at www.iolo.org/global/About_the_ ILO/About_the_ ILO/About_the_ ILO/index.htm.
12 ‘Are men and women equal in Hong Kong today?’, CSR Asia monthly briefing: CSR Wednesday, Equal Opportunities Commission, Hong Kong, 4 June 2008.
13 Andrea Rossi and Yianna Lambrou, Gender and Equity Issues in Liquid Biofuels Production: Minimizing the Risks to Maximize the Opportunities (Rome: FAO; www.fao.org/docrep/010/a1309e/a1309e00.htm).
the context of male/female professions and the reconciliation of a work–life balance. Although women in the developed world may face different socioeconomic challenges as a result of their gender identity, common among women of the North and South is a lack of decision-making power, as well as an absence of control and access to resources such as financial credit, technology and property.

The lack of attention paid to gender issues in the corporate world was highlighted by the main CSR-relevant news-making study of the quarter: the IBM report *Global CEO Study: The Enterprise of the Future*. Its survey of over 1,000 CEOs worldwide found that were perceiving consumer interests in the social dimension of business has become a key strategic issue. Perhaps women leaders might be involved in this strategic shift? JCC asked the authors, but found that they had not included a gender variable in their study. On our request they kindly 'drove it' into their data, to find that 5% of their surveyed CEOs are women. 'We did not do any additional analysis using this variable, but it will for the future certainly be interesting,' explained Dr Phaedra Kortekaas of IBM. The 5% figure and the oversight of the relevance of the variable suggest that gender mainstreaming, let alone equality, has some way to go in the corporate world.

Given the scale of the challenge, why is there a lack of gender consciousness in CSR, even though many women are personally involved as CSR practitioners? Interviews with executives led Kate Grosser and Jeremy Moon to conclude ‘a lack of civil society engagement with business about gender equality in the workplace’. As civil society pressure plays an important role in shaping corporate responsibili-

16 Grosser and Moon, op. cit.
18 Schultz, op. cit.
19 Marshall, op. cit.
Additional reasons for this lack of a gendered engagement in CSR may be the absence of gender solidarity due to competitive attitudes both professionally and personally, and a deliberate downplaying of gender issues by female captains in industry, for personal reasons.

This is illustrated by the attitude of the most powerful female CEO in American history, Carly Fiorina, who was fired from her tenure at Hewlett-Packard after five and a half years on the job. In her memoir entitled *Tough Choices*, Fiorina describes that she did not want to talk about her gender or the glass ceiling as she felt these topics were distractions from the mission at hand and might cause alienation among the vast majority of her employees. Fiorina further states that she made a deliberate choice to downplay issues of gender in interviews with the media, as she did not want to draw attention to herself. This lack of clear leadership on women’s issues was reflected by results from the Lifeworth survey of the CSR Chicks mailing list. Only 34% of the respondents, all female CSR practitioners, answered yes to the question ‘Has the most senior woman in your organisation that you have some direct experience of, mentioned their activities to improve the organisation’s impact on women?’ Respondents considered ‘Personal Leadership from Women CSR Professionals’ to be the most important activity within CSR to advance women over the next five years, with 46.0% considering it ‘very important’.

Servane Mouazan, managing director of Ogunte, which works on women’s leadership development, told *JCC* that more women business executives need to connect with women who are serving their local communities more broadly. She said the Global Summit of Women is an example of how successful women can develop an elite view, by praising themselves for their own success and their support for women and girls in poverty. Thus a critical perspective of how their own societies, institutions and personal behaviours affect women is overlooked. This lack of critical perspective, and the kind of reticence expressed by Ms Fiorina, does not promote awareness of the nature of gender discrimination. Consequently, misunderstandings of attempts to promote diversity at work are widespread. For instance, in a paper to be presented at the Engendering Leadership conference held at the University of Western Australia, Rhonda Pyper suggested that white males can see affirmative action as about providing special privilege rather than levelling power imbalances. While Pyper was describing these change initiatives in the context of equity legislation in Canada, one wonders if the same may be said about reactions to the Equality Bill that was passed in the UK in June.

The pressing need for CSR practitioners to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of middle-level management to promote gender equality is acknowledged by the ISOE banking case study, where it was found that instruments that are sensitising for gender equality (against gender stereotypes) contributed to the success of CSR initiatives adopted by one of the two banks surveyed in the study. It is only through this process of winning the ‘people’s case’

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for gender equality that a change in attitudes will translate to a corresponding change in organisational behaviour. While gender issues may be less easily discussed than climate change, relying on the business case alone to carry broader normative perspectives is unwise, as the societal change desired requires a change in the emotional basis of gendered relations.

The emotional baggage surrounding gendered power relations is reflected in the varied definitions that have been used to bring meaning to the word ‘gender’, ranging from the use of gender as a concept, an ideology, a perspective, a role, a paradigm, a mechanism and a value. The confusion surrounding the use of the term brings up the question of ‘the political reasons for the disappearance of other problematics, concepts, and words (“women,” “feminism,” and “patriarchy” probably being the most significant) for which progressively but rapidly gender has been efficiently substituted’. While the use of gender as a catch-all term does not eradicate the ‘fight’ against patriarchy, male domination, power relations between the sexes and the equality/inequality between men and women, one wonders if the term ‘gender’ now holds any meaning at all, especially when the richness of detail and the sharing of meaning and experience of other concepts it embraces are now subsumed in a single word. Perhaps ‘gender’ is now a term that is used unknowingly and carelessly to ‘enable analyses that disregard patriarchal relations of domination’, with the unintended consequence that ‘gender’ is now a word to legitimise ‘the absence of any relation of domination, any system of domination, any thought of domination, of all domination’.22

If business is to take on a more active role in women’s advancement, existing CSR instruments to promote women’s equality must be strengthened. In examining the gender practices of UK companies claiming best practice, the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility found that, although there has been ‘some improved reporting of performance information’ relating to gender equality, the level of reporting was still limited. Authors Kate Grosser and Jeremy Moon attribute this to ‘the fact that companies committed to gender equality perceive little advantage to reporting quality information, where market, social and governmental actors appear neither to demand nor reward it, and where media attention risks misuse and misinterpretation of data’.23 Perhaps an improvement in gendered data collection and impact assessment will occur if the investors in companies begin to make this a priority. Despite conclusive evidence about the business case for gender equality being presented by Catalyst in reports published in 2004 and in 2008, there is limited pressure from the responsible investment community on these issues.24 Providing ‘Evidence of Business Case for Gender Equality’ was the second most important activity for CSR to advance women over the next five years, according to respondents to the Lifeworth survey. The launch of the ‘Women’s Principles’ by investment firm Calvert, in partnership with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in 2004, has not yet led to a widespread focus on corporate responsibilities for empowering and investing in women worldwide.25 As the asset management industry has generally been dominated by men, as are corporate boards, the discussion of women at investor relations meetings probably leaves a lot to be desired.

The conclusion must be that real change

22 Ibid.
will occur if women decide to lead the agenda themselves. ‘What Rwandan women demonstrated is that in order to create change in their lives, they looked to themselves first,’ explained Irene Navidad in Hanoi. ‘That is why I say over and over to women everywhere—it is not enough to envision change, you must see yourself as the agent of change. This next century is ours, and we women are poised to demonstrate to the world that the economies of each of our countries can only flourish, as it did in Rwanda, if we are given the chance to lead. But like the Rwandan women, do not wait for leadership to come calling, remember that it’s not enough to envision change, you must see yourself as the agent of change.’

**Inspi(RED) marketing or (RED)wash?**

In June the largest student and alumni network on corporate responsibility, Net Impact, organised its first European conference; or, to be more precise, volunteers from the University of Geneva and INSEAD organised it ably for them. The efforts of students in bringing together hundreds of delegates for a packed programme indicates the importance of Net Impact as a key connector in an emerging movement of young professionals that are ‘socialising’ business, as much as socialising with business. Or so we may hope. More on that later.

One of the highlights for an audience yearning for the possibility of both a corporate career and a clear conscience was a plenary on Product(RED) and its contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Launched in 2006 by U2 singer and activist Paul Hewson (known popularly as Bono), Product(RED) is ‘a brand designed to engage business and consumer power in the fight against AIDS in Africa’. It works with the ‘world’s best brands’ to make unique (RED)-branded products and direct up to 50% of their gross profits to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, to fund African HIV/AIDS programmes with a focus on the health of women and children. (RED) explains it ‘is not a charity or campaign’ but ‘an economic initiative that aims to deliver a sustainable flow of private sector money to the Global Fund’. Greta Thomas told a few hundred delegates at the conference in Geneva that Product(RED) is ‘the most successful cause marketing initiative in history’, having raised over 100 million dollars for the Global Fund, through about 350 co-branded products in 60 countries. Product partners include Converse, Gap, Motorola, Emporio Armani, Apple, Hallmark, Dell, Microsoft and American Express. (RED) reports there are currently more than 45,000 people on antiretroviral medication in Ghana, Swaziland and Rwanda owing to support from these funds.

Great stuff. So who could be complaining? Around the time of its launch, some NGOs grumbled. ‘(RED) is unlikely to raise significant amounts of money to close the funding gap of US$3 billion over 2006–7 and risks giving business a good cover story without pressing them for a more substantial contribution,’ wrote Aditi Sharma, International HIV/AIDS Campaign Co-ordinator with ActionAid International. But (RED) couldn’t be held responsible for the woeful response of the wider private sector at the time of the call for donations. A more worrying attack for (RED) came a year later when Advertising Age, a key magazine for that profession, published an article that argued the brands involved in (RED) had spent far more on advertising

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28 All quotes from the Net Impact European conference were taken from podcasts of the speeches, available at www.netimpact.org.
than had been raised for the global fund at that point in time. They had got their figures slightly wrong, so boss and co-owner of the company behind (RED), Bobby Shriver, slammed the article. His riposte did, however, contain evidence that the companies had spent almost twice as much on advertising than had been raised by (RED) for AIDS work at that time. The criticism must have hurt, as 15 months later Ms Thomas mentioned it from the podium, and explained that, as people are going to continue being materialistic, and businesses are going to continue to advertise, it’s worth looking to get some good out of that process. The president of (RED), Tamsin Smith, told the New York Times, ‘We’re not encouraging people to buy more, but if they’re going to buy a pair of Armani sunglasses, we’re trying to get a cut of that for a good cause,’ she said.29

With people doing such ingenious, well-meaning and useful work, it can seem rather mean to pick holes. But someone has to do the unpleasant jobs. ‘Not encouraging people to buy more? Was that really part of their pitch to Dell when asking the computer company to pay a big licence fee upfront, as Dell planned a prime-time 2008 SuperBowl advertising slot in the United States for its (RED) laptop. All cause marketing, all advertising, all sponsorship, all PR is ultimately directed at encouraging people to buy from a particular company. Let us accept that and consider whether or not it is a good thing for the cause concerned that people buy more from a particular company.

From the floor of the conference the prolific writer on responsible business Wayne Visser asked the question that was in the minds of many who work on corporate responsibility issues: how does (RED) deal with the social responsibility of its product partners? Although Dr Visser chose not to give examples of (RED)’s product partners engaging in commerce that is ultimately detrimental to the cause, he would be aware that a UN study has found that corporations may be undermining the global fight against AIDS due to the impacts of their value chains on the conditions for HIV transmission and progression, and by not seeking to address these.30 For example, cobalt is a necessary component of all mobile phones. Cobalt is predominantly to be found in the Congo. A vigorous mining industry has sprung up to service this need. And mining has been key to the spread of AIDS in Africa. So we are entitled to ask about the negative impact on the fight against HIV of purchasing, for example, Motorola(RED) phones. It can be put quite bluntly: an initiative that promotes more business-as-usual in these high-risk sectors by encouraging sales is in fact exacerbating the spread of HIV/AIDS.31

In response to concerns about its product partners, (RED) espoused a set of principles, among which are: ‘(RED) respects its employees and asks its partners to do the same with their employees and the people who help make their products or

31 Ibid.
deliver their services’ and ‘(RED) promotes HIV/AIDS workplace policies and practices’. To this end, it is working with the Global Business Coalition against HIV. In 2008 Motorola was not yet a member of this coalition; and the company’s 2007 CSR report does not mention working on HIV/AIDS workplace policies and programmes with its suppliers. In that report the auditor Verité calls for Motorola to do more on promoting awareness among its suppliers of the company’s code on various aspects of labour relations. So there is no evidence that Motorola has improved the impacts of its value chain to a degree that could give one confidence in a statement that one of its products is ‘Designed to Eliminate AIDS in Africa’, as its advertising claims.

Ms Thomas responded to Dr Visser by suggesting that when a company ‘signs up for Product(RED) it is arguably putting a great big target on its forehead for spotlighting its broader CSR activities’. This spotlight effect is yet to be seen in Motorola’s policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS. So, perhaps by writing this article we are in some way helping (RED) achieve this spotlight effect. We are happy to help, but might a more hands-on approach from (RED) more usefully consider the product partners as well as the intended beneficiaries in Africa?

The head of Private Sector Resource Mobilisation at the Global Fund, David Evans, declared from the podium that ‘(RED) involvement can be the start of a conversation with a company and in creating a deeper engagement with your cause’. He explained the Fund’s discussions with Nike—which is a (RED) partner through its ownership of Converse—about what could be done on gender issues, given the ‘feminisation’ of the AIDS epidemic. ‘Financial contributions . . . can’t be the end of a conversation; it has to be the start,’ he said.

Ms Thomas explained that (RED) encourages companies where possible to source or manufacture in Africa, in order to create employment in export industries. Some of the partners have sought to create positive relationships with African entrepreneurs as part of their (RED) commitment. Designer Giorgio Armani said, ‘as I set about designing my first collection of Emporio Armani(RED) products I wanted to create a tangible and personal connection with Africa. What better way than to incorporate the striking art of Owusu-Ankomah . . . ?’ Armani is now sourcing materials for its T-shirts from Mozambique, although no information is provided on its website or that of (RED) about the working conditions. More enterprise in low-income countries, whatever the enterprise and whatever the employment conditions, is not in itself progressive: the problems in the mining and manufacturing sectors provide a simple illustration of that. Creating decent work in sustainable enterprises must be the goal. The US company GAP was more forthcoming about its aims for its (RED) products to make a positive contribution beyond the fundraising. The company has worked to ensure decent labour conditions in the factories there. Of particular relevance is its work on HIV/AIDS in the garment sector in Lesotho. It has funded the Apparel Lesotho Alliance to Fight AIDS (ALAFa), to provide HIV testing and treatment options to thousands of garment workers. GAP has also lent its expertise on dyes and yarns, thus building local capacity to enter the Western market.

Aside from questions of how much is being raised compared to the marketing spend, and whether the participating companies are doing much on the HIV/AIDS impacts of their value chains, others have raised a broader critique about consumerism. The critics say it sends a message to the public that the current economic sys-

33 Joachim Melchers, ‘Cooperation with Giorgio Armani: Owusu-Ankomah supports the fight against AIDS’, Owusu-Ankomah website; www.owusu-ankomah.de/news.html#armani.
34 web.archive.org/web/20071031223440/http://www.gapinc.com/red/progress_article_2.html
tem and its large corporations are part of the solution to social challenges such as HIV/AIDS rather than an obstacle to their abatement. A political economic analysis of the reasons why governments, communities and individuals have been unable to protect and then look after themselves adequately can raise questions about the current system of corporate globalisation. One group called Product(RE) argues that ‘simply buying an item or advertising support for a cause will not solve an epidemic . . . it takes thinking more critically and consciously about how we consume’. It launched a counter-campaign that raises funds for HIV/AIDS in Africa through the reclaiming and recycling of consumer products, branded with a (RE)D logo, which involves (RE)cycling. They argue that (RED) ‘implies that corporations, branding and consumption are a necessary and healthy part of involvement in a cause . . . [but such] marketing is not only manipulative, but damaging. It claims to erase any guilt from shopping by offering products that aim to be not only ethically neutral but activist in nature . . . “This is for the greater good”, supplants doubts about the questionable origins or future life of an object’.  

Could Product(RED) be a form of (RED)wash, a corporate pretence towards social benefit, perhaps more insidious than ‘greenwash’, the pretence of environmental friendliness by business? The company that owns the (RED) brand, Persuaders LLC, was not impressed, and its lawyers took steps against the (RE)D initiative. With that, the company is asserting that its critics should be legally accountable for any breach of copyright. However, others may question to whom the Persuaders LLC, or its owners Paul Hewson and Bobby Shriver, should be accountable to in respect of their product partners’ direct and indirect impacts on public health. Because, when pressed on the criticisms we have outlined here, (RED) spokespersons remind us, ‘we are a business, not a charity’. As a business with a growing role in the fight against AIDS, Persuaders LLC now requires more attention to its own social responsibility. The first step is transparency. Persuaders LLC does not have a website. Its co-owners are two of the richest men in the world, one of whom wrote the disingenuous statement ‘(RED) “shareholders” are the poorest of the world’s poor’. That sounds like a great idea. However, while it is owned by people who don’t need the money, and encourages people to buy into their brand to give money to charity, it is important to know how much income (RED) receives from the process. It does not divulge the licence fees it is paid to set up the product partnerships, what percentage of its own turnover (if any) it is taking as profit, or what levels of accountability it aspires to in operational issues such as its own overheads and salaries. The contract between the Fund and Persuaders LLC is not public and neither are those between Persuaders and the participating companies. One person working on the project told the lead author of this review that the participating companies can pull out of the scheme if Bono is not involved in future. If the Fund’s projections are correct, then this would mean in future almost 10% of the Fund’s work would depend on the interest and health of one rock star. People and institutions change over time, for better or worse, and so systems should be ‘future-proof’. A lack of transparency means concerned people cannot check these issues.

Another concern has been raised by some NGOs about the influence of (RED), and its corporate partners, on the Global Fund. That fund is governed by rules that ensure human need, not donor interest, determines the activities it funds. However, (RED) wished to promote itself to consumers by highlighting who was benefiting, and so a compromise was reached.

35 reinspired.blogspot.com/2006/11/frequently-asked-questions.html
whereby (RED) could identify itself with projects in Africa, but not further, and the connecting of a participating company to a specific project was done following careful procedures. In subsequent years further specificity has been allowed, including specific countries and types of intended beneficiary. As a result other corporate donors can now brand their philanthropy in the same way. If corporate giving increases, this could cause problems for the system of needs-driven grant-making. The influence of business interests on the strategy of (RED) is illustrated by Persuaders currently considering whether to expand their giving to Asia, so that Asian companies may be more inclined to join (RED).

There seems to be a pattern emerging in the way (RED) responds to criticism. When criticised that it is not doing enough for the social cause, it reminds people it is a business not a charity. When criticised for not being a good business, it reminds everyone of its charitable contributions. Given (RED)’s offices in London are within the PR company Freud, one might be inclined to think this double-speak is carefully conceived. However, it is more likely that it reflects unreconstructed notions of business and charity. Cause marketing maintains that dichotomy: business makes money, charity takes it, and the political economic order stays the same. That order is being eroded by corporate responsibility and social enterprise, which seek to create social benefit through core business operations. (RED) is not part of that movement. It could be. It could be a catalyst for mainstream corporate responsibility, starting by ensuring that the value chains of its product partners have the best possible workplace policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS.

The Global Fund is leading the way in tackling HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. It has unrivalled levels of transparency on matters other than corporate engagement. The private sector, (RED) included, must respect that transparency and needs-driven governance process. The key is to keep the goal in sight. Although for (RED) ‘in the end it’s about the dollars’, the Fund’s purpose is not about raising cash, but about reducing disease; is not about spending money on grantees, but ultimately about reducing the need for people to need such charity in the first place. Unless the Fund and its private sector partners keep in view and seek to tackle the root causes of the problems, including the way economic processes and companies are involved, then they will fail their historic mandate.

Movement East?

AT THE SAME NET IMPACT CONFERENCE, Simon Zadek of AccountAbility encouraged younger delegates to think about why they were interested in the conference. Perhaps in the future being a CSR manager in a company such as Motorola could be an important role to play; or perhaps not, he mused. He challenged delegates to consider what the challenges of tomorrow’s world will be, rather than focusing on what has emerged over the last decade. The emerging corporations on the world stage are from Brazil, India, China and Russia, he explained, and engaging them is key. This view is shared by other Western practitioners, such as Jane Nelson.38

38 Sam Bond, ‘China and India will shape the future of CSR’, edie, 13 March 2006; www.edie.net/news/news_story.asp?id=11178&channel=0.
with Harvard University, who has emphasised that India and China need to embrace corporate responsibility or other efforts are futile. Policy Advisor Eddie Rich,\textsuperscript{39} of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, agrees that the influence of companies from these countries is key to the effort against corruption worldwide. It was promising, therefore, that the IBM study of CEOs found that Asian respondents were placing higher importance on their social responsibilities than those from other regions.

As a contribution to the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education working group on Research Priorities, in April Lifeworth conducted a survey of the 4,000 subscribers to its bulletin on CSR about their view of the future of research needs on responsible business. Respondents considered that the most important regions for future CSR research are in Asia. Other regions with emerging nations were also ranked highly, as shown in Figure 1.\textsuperscript{40}

Dr Zadek wondered out loud whether it would be the Chinese oil firm Sinopec, rather than Shell, that would have more influence on sustainable development in

\begin{figure}[h]
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\textsuperscript{39} Eddie Rich, ‘10 Developments that EITI will Face in 2008’, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, 2008; eitransparency.org/node/299.

years to come, for good or ill, and whether Net Impact delegates would seek jobs in the more challenging companies and environments in order to maximise their influence. ‘What’s your appetite?’ That question encourages us to reflect on whether corporate responsibility is emerging as a profession or social movement, or both. If processes of professionalisation dominate, with codes and qualifications determining what is considered appropriate, will that help or hinder the transformative potential of people working in this space? Many of those people speak of being part of a movement: a search for ‘corporate social responsibility movement’ delivers 13,700 hits on Google. If it is a social movement, what are the implications for priorities of work, and of research?

The field of social movement studies is large, and draws on experiences as diverse as the civil rights movement, the feminist movement and the environmental movement. The basic insights of these historical experiences and analyses are that people in a movement benefit from developing an understanding of common values and goals. They benefit from a sense of shared identity, from knowledge of the repertoires of action that movement participants use, and the elites that they engage with. They consider methods of entryism into those elites and the dangers of co-optation, because they recognise the role of power in both shaping the problems they seek to overcome and the opportunities for change. Consequently, they discuss strategies for influencing the political opportunities they can seize, and choose terminology on the basis of its potential to mobilise people and create deeper change. People participating in movements often recognise particular convening processes, networks and organisations as key to the movement’s success and evolution. In light of this context of the history of social movements, the corporate responsibility movement, if there is such a thing, still has some way to progress. The limited evidence of gender consciousness and solidarity among women working in corporate responsibility, discussed above, may be a symptom of a movement that does not yet know itself. Whether the outcome of networks such as Net Impact will be the socialising of business, rather than merely the business of socialising, is yet to be seen. The potential for a movement to emerge and have a historic impact on society is explored in more detail by the lead author of this review in The Corporate Responsibility Movement.42

41 In July 2008.