



Photo: Adriane Ohanesian

Opportunities for Public-Private Partnerships in Education: Bringing Together Business, Foundations & International Donors

Background

As we embark on the 2030 development agenda, there is a unique opportunity to create new public-private partnerships to promote universal education and learning, and to address critical, collective global challenges. Building on lessons from other sectors, including health, agriculture, gender, and climate, the education sector is becoming increasingly effective at identifying the core elements that make these partnerships between diverse actors most effective.

The private sector and leading foundations can seize the opportunity created by greater attention to, and new ways of, delivering education in emergencies to forge partnerships focused on promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, fostering 21st century skills, and creating safer, more inclusive, and more productive societies. For example, the first World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 will bring together world leaders to address urgent humanitarian crises and to launch the Education Crisis Platform and Breakthrough Fund for education in emergencies. Also, the upcoming report of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity will raise education even further up on the global agenda, presenting a bold evidence-based vision for how all actors can contribute to transforming the financing and delivery of education.

Education is a human right and while the primary responsibility for providing education lies with country governments, there are increasingly important opportunities for business and foundations to partner with the international donor community to offer innovative and scaled-up solutions for delivering this right. It is in the interest of governments, in terms of economic growth and social prosperity, to identify ways to bring everyone into the education system to fulfill their potential and become members of the new, engaged citizenship of the 21st century economy and society. In the first year of the 2030 agenda the Global Business Coalition for Education (GBC-Education), as a leading convener of the private sector in education, will identify new opportunities to leverage the assets of businesses to foster collaboration with diverse partners to rapidly and effectively expand access to universal quality education.

This brief outlines the key elements of these partnerships and examples of success from which foundations, business, donors, and governments can develop new models for reaching every child and young person.



Who are the Key Partners in Public-Private Partnerships?

Businesses include for-profit organizations or their associated corporate foundations engaged in education through social impact investments as a function of their corporate social responsibility programs or philanthropic activities.

Foundations are nonprofit organizations set up and financially endowed by a private individual, family, or group of individuals, usually for the purpose of philanthropy. Unlike public charities, private foundations do not receive money from the general public. Foundations often financially support the charitable work of donor organizations and public charities; some also directly implement their own aid and development programs.

International Donors include bilateral and multilateral donors. Governments provide direct bilateral aid to recipient governments as part of their official foreign aid budget. Examples include the United States Agency for International Development, the United Kingdom Department for International Development, and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. Multilateral aid is provided by actors aggregating funding from donor governments and private donors to fund their own aid programs in developing countries. Multilateral organizations are run by government representatives and include agencies such as the World Bank, UNICEF, the Global Partnership for Education, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and other regional development banks.

Leveraging the Comparative Advantage of All Partners

The business community has great potential to partner with donor agencies and foundations to identify and implement solutions for achieving universal access to quality education. Partnerships between the private and public sectors offer immense opportunity for success, allowing each actor to bring their unique strengths and assets to the table. From co-financing and scaling pilots to providing innovative financing and technological support, public-private partnerships can lead to more comprehensive, effective interventions and deepen impact with potential outcomes including increased scalability, entry into new markets, and reduction in investment risk.

Business

- Provision of products and services specific to each industry, including technology, financing, business models, and technical expertise
- Market Driven Solutions
- Communications outreach
- Employee networks
- Consumer networks for global reach
- Supply chains and vendor relationships
- Political influence
- Innovation, creativity and ingenuity
- Employment opportunities

Foundations

- Financial resources
- Rapid and flexible funding modalities
- Ability to move quickly and adapt to fast changing circumstances
- Ability to take initial financial risk to identify and support new innovations
- Serve as a bridge between private sector and government

International Donors (Bilateral and Multilateral Donor Agencies)

- Strong financing mechanisms
- Technical expertise
- Local operational partners
- Access to communities and political leaders
- Knowledge base of best practice
- Ability to scale successful interventions



The Toughest Challenge: Partnerships Needed to Address the Syrian Refugee Crisis

In response to the Syrian refugee crisis, partnerships are needed to provide urgent education solutions. The following examples showcase how public-private partnerships can **leverage the comparative advantages** of each partner and share risk and expertise to create effective, innovative, scalable programs that increase access to quality education for Syrian children. GBC-Education is working with some of these partners to build on their existing efforts for new and promising partnership models.

Kiron University

Partners: Business and International Donors

Context: Launched in 2015, in collaboration with 17 private sector partners and the German government, Kiron University provides free university education to refugees regardless of their legal status or financial situation. Students take online open source courses for the first two years, complete an internship, and spend the final year completing their degree in a partner university, the degree granting institution. Enrollment started with 1,250 students in 2015 and Kiron plans to expand to 10,000 places by the end of 2016. Fifty percent of students enrolled in 2015 were from Syria.

Comparative Advantages: Deutsche Bank and Ernst and Young contributed their **technical expertise** to the creation of the fund. Funding is provided by private partners—including BMW and the BMW Foundation, Google, Thyssen Krupp, and Bertelsmann—and is matched by the German government, providing **financial resources** and offering the ability to **move quickly and adapt** to support this innovative project. Additional funding comes from crowdsourcing and alumni donating a small portion of their salary after graduation. The support of business, private foundations, and the German government has enabled Kiron to **respond to changing circumstances on the ground and scale successful interventions quickly**.

Edraak

Partners: Business and Foundations

Context: In 2015, Crescent Petroleum partnered with Edraak, an initiative of the Queen Rania Foundation and the first non-profit Arabic massive open online course, to develop a series of English language courses aimed at providing Arab youth with better job skills and opportunities for employment. The curriculum was created with the British Council and the materials include practice software developed by Cerego. The first course cycle in November 2015 initially attracted 130,000 enrollees and ultimately 8,558 learners completed the course and received a certificate—the highest number in Edraak's history. The Norwegian Refugee Council in Jordan also brought the course to the Zaatari refugee camp, where 40 learners have completed it so far. Another cycle of the course is set to begin in May 2016, with a third cycle to be scheduled in the future.

Comparative Advantages: This collaboration benefits from the **regional expertise** and **funding consistency** of the Queen Rania Foundation; **technology, innovation**, and **funding capacity** of the private sector; and **access to communities** and **local operational partners** of donor agencies.

REFUNITE

Partners: Business, Foundations, and International Donors

Context: Bringing together 21 businesses, private foundations, and donor agency partners, REFUNITE offers a free mobile platform that reunites refugees with lost family members. Partnership with telecommunications and technology companies has allowed the provision of a free mobile and online platform, SMS services, and toll-free hotlines in certain countries and offered free internet access via the platform in 11 countries. Refugees can use the website or mobile app, or even make connections with the most basic mobile phones through the SMS feature. Currently, REFUNITE's global database contains more than 450,000 registered individuals and reunites an average of 100 to 150 families each month. The platform is currently available in seven languages and the call center offers multilingual services for refugees who are illiterate or need assistance.

Comparative Advantages: The multiple telecommunications partners provide **technical expertise** and **continually updated technology** for the creation and use of the platform as well as **security assessments** to protect the safety of the users. The private foundations offer **flexible funding support** and have the ability to **take the initial financial risk** for the innovative project. Finally, donor agencies such as the UNHCR provide **consultations** on refugee protection and **technical expertise and best practice information** on refugee and reunification issues.

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GBC-Education's Commitment to Developing Public-Private Partnerships

As part of its value proposition, GBC-Education creates avenues for cooperation with bilateral and multilateral agencies and foundations for the private sector. Through its own initiatives, GBC-Education also works to identify and create partnerships to address barriers to education. The following is a sample of partnerships that GBC-Education has fostered, and hopes to continue to build on in future initiatives.



Safe Schools Initiative: Nigeria

Partners: Business and International Donors

Value: Promoting public attention on delivery of education innovation

Context: The first Safe Schools Initiative was launched in Nigeria in May 2014 following the kidnapping of 276 Chibok schoolgirls. The Initiative brought together public and private partners to institute a transfer program to move students in high-risk areas to safer parts of the country, develop risk profiles and emergency plans for schools, and provide education for internally displaced children living in internally displaced persons camps. Since its launch, Safe Schools Nigeria has mobilized more than \$30 million for the protection of schools in Northeast Nigeria, and as of October 2015, nearly 50,000 children displaced by Boko Haram received help through the Initiative. Following work in Nigeria, GBC-Education has led the response to attacks against schools more broadly by coordinating the business response to education in emergencies and launching new Safe Schools Initiatives in the Ebola-affected countries, Pakistan, Latin America, and countries primarily affected by the Syrian refugee crisis—specifically Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan.

Comparative Advantages: GBC-Education business leaders—with support from the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, A World at School, and the Nigerian government—contributed an initial **financial investment** of \$10 million to launch the initiative. By engaging high-level CEOs, the private sector was able to use its **political influence** to highlight the need to target resources to the most marginalized children and incentivize the government to increase domestic funding for education. **Strong financing mechanisms** were provided through a multi-donor trust fund hosted by the United Nations Development Programme and with international support from the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway, Germany, and the African Development Bank.

Safe Schools Initiative: Countries Affected by the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Partners: Business and Foundations

Value: Demonstrating diverse and innovative ways that the private sector can be a partner in addressing humanitarian crises

Context: In late 2015, GBC-Education expanded operations into the Middle East. With 5.7 million children inside Syria alone in need of education assistance, urgent action is needed to avoid losing the country's entire generation to the conflict. As a result, GBC-Education has been convening the private sector to address education for Syrian refugees by identifying and highlighting partnerships to provide innovative solutions to educate more than 1 million Syrian refugee children in Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon. Diverse organizations—including businesses and foundations—are involved in this initiative, illustrating how different partners can pivot their programming and resources to innovate and improve existing system gaps in delivering educational opportunity.

Comparative Advantages: In February 2016 at the Supporting Syria and the Region Conference, GBC-Education announced a commitment of \$75 million by businesses, foundations and nonprofit partners for financing innovative learning solutions for Syrian refugee children. Together these partners were able to contribute to the **provision of products and services, financial resources,** and **rapid and flexible funding modalities** to make this large commitment.

Global Education Platform Initiative

Partners: Private Sector, Foundations, and International Donors

Value: Convening partners to engage in dialogue and consultation on education solutions

Context: GBC-Education launched the Global Education Platform initiative which sought to advance literacy, pathways to employment, and 21st century skills development by accelerating technologies that allow marginalized youth populations to access, search, and create locally relevant content.

Comparative Advantages: Through this initiative, representatives from the private sector, private foundations, and multilateral donor agencies contributed to an inclusive consultation process, which included individually tapping into the expertise of major foundations to **bridge conversations between the private sector and government**. Through collective, high-level convenings, this initiative united private foundations with multilateral agencies to provide **technical expertise and knowledge of best practices**, while **identifying impact communities and additional local leaders** that could be brought on as partners. The consultative process and in-person convenings resulted in two reports and a pilot program.

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With the first World Humanitarian Summit around the corner, the time is ripe to form new partnerships, leveraging the comparative advantages of each partner in order to implement innovative solutions to providing quality education for all. The examples in this brief highlight a diversity of successful partnerships and are emblematic of potential new collaborations.

