

Education For All



28 February 2011

BACKGROUND NOTE

Pathways to Partnerships

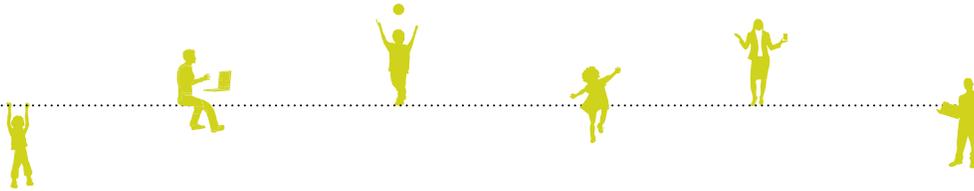
As the complexity of economic and social issues affecting local and global communities continues to escalate, it has become increasingly clear that no single actor in the philanthropic realm can hope to match the impact of funders and humanitarian organizations working together. Each change agent has unique skills and resources to bring to bear on today's most difficult challenges. Non-profit organizations and other independent players have the on-the-ground knowledge, theories of change and the local manpower to ensure that the right services are delivered with integrity. Private foundations bring subject matter expertise and funding. Community members add a nuanced understanding of the cultural strengths that can be harnessed to turn challenges into opportunities. In addition to funding, corporations bring expertise in marketing, logistics, research and development and project management. The United Nations provides unparalleled access to leaders and policy makers and, most importantly, the ability to unite and coordinate those seeking to make a difference. By fitting these pieces together, the result is much more than the sum of the individual parts.

Over the past decade, public-private sector partnerships have become a creative and sophisticated mechanism for addressing priority challenges and to leverage the skills and resources of the private sector and civil society toward the goals of the United Nations. Through the work of the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP) that provides strategic advice on partnerships between the private sector and the United Nations system, the Organization has increasingly engaged the private sector and civil society as a partner in helping to achieve its goals, in particular, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have established partnerships to integrate the private sector's perspective, its networks and expertise in their work, in order to effectively implement the international development policies and make change happen, where it is most needed.

Special Event

For the fourth time, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) is convening a special event in New York to strengthen partnerships of the United Nations and its agencies, funds and programmes with the business and philanthropic communities. This event is co-organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), UNOP, UNICEF and UNESCO, in collaboration with the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy (CECP). Experts, public figures and corporate and non-corporate foundations are being invited to discuss possible partnerships in support of the international development agenda. This year's event will focus ways of creating greater access for girls and boys to complete primary education; and promoting education and training for tomorrow's economy. Events, such as this special event, activate and actualize the potential of all possible actors. Those seeking to engage in the process of making a difference are strongly encouraged to lend this unique ability by engaging in this collaborative conversation.





Expected Outcome

The key outcomes of the special event will be to provide increased focus to issues central to the achievement of education for all. This is expected to be achieved via the broadening of the range of stakeholders involved in the work of ECOSOC, as well as increasing the awareness amongst the philanthropic community on the progress made and the challenges faced in achieving these important goals. Moreover the special event hopes to promote concrete initiatives by the philanthropic community and initiate new partnerships that would accelerate progress in expanding access for both boys and girls to primary education and also promoting education and training for 21st century skills.

The Organizers

DESA serves as the secretariat of ECOSOC and supports its deliberations and consensus-building of Member States. This demands high-level engagement on many global development issues and consultations with international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. DESA operates within a framework of internationally agreed upon goals known as the United Nations Development Agenda: a shared vision of human progress rooted in the values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and mutual responsibility. DESA plays a central role in monitoring and implementing global commitments to economic and social progress, including the MDGs. It oversees the global statistical system and produces authoritative population estimates and projections that are used worldwide. DESA also manages the Development Account, a fund established by the General Assembly to help countries meet their development challenges.

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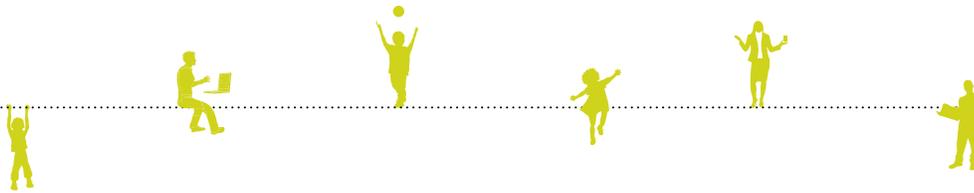
UNOP serves as a gateway for public-private partnerships with the United Nations system. It aims to help the underprivileged by harnessing the interest, competencies and resources across sectors. Working with leaders in business and civil society, UNOP provides a platform for strategic policy dialogue and engages financial, technical and management expertise to achieve the MDGs. It provides partnership advisory services and outreach to a variety of entities, including academic institutions, companies, foundations, government agencies and civil society organizations. It oversees the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) and manages the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), which promotes democratization throughout the world, supporting democratic institutions, promoting human rights, and ensuring the participation of all groups in democratic processes.

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UNICEF is the children's fund at the United Nations dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for children around the globe. It advocates for special protection for the most disadvantaged children - victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities. UNICEF also mobilizes funds to assist governments in building their capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families, including in the areas of education, child protection, sanitation and development. UNICEF equally operates in emergency capacities to guarantee life-saving assistance to children affected by disasters. As a United Nations body, UNICEF partners considerably with grassroots entities to ensure the fundamental rights of children are maintained on all fronts.

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UNESCO is the lead agency at the United Nations for education, the sciences, culture and communication. In the realm of education, its mission is to provide international leadership to create learning societies with educational opportunities for all populations; provide expertise and foster partnerships to strengthen national educational leadership and the capacity of countries to offer quality education for all. UNESCO is considered to be an intellectual leader, an honest broker and clearing house for ideas, propelling both countries and the international community to accelerate progress towards these goals. The organization also facilitates the development of partnerships and monitors progress, in particular by publishing an annual Global Monitoring Report that tracks the achievements of countries and the international community towards the six Education for All goals. .

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CECP is the only international forum of business CEOs and chairpersons focused exclusively on corporate philanthropy. CECP's mission is to lead the business community in raising the level and quality of corporate philanthropy. It offers members essential resources, including a proprietary online benchmarking tool, networking programmes, research, and opportunities for best-practice sharing. Through innovative programmes like those aimed at eradicating diseases or raising childhood literacy rates, companies can also improve employee retention and heighten brand recognition, CECP is intently focused on three guiding principles: representing the CEO voice incorporate philanthropy, encouraging business discipline in the field, and setting the standards for effective philanthropy practice and measurement.

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