



KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION FORUM

ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP FORM

TITLE: CAN BUSINESSES CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE? HOW THE PROGRAMME BUSINESS & PEACE MIGHT PAVE THE WAY TO CONTRIBUTE TO SDG 16

1. *Central Theme*

The role of business in society has changed. On one side businesses are expanding their operations and activities outside the traditional markets, establishing complex global supply chains which touch base in different and challenging environments where additional and unpredictable risks can undermine business feasibility; on the other side society is more aware of their actions and impacts and it is demanding more responsible behaviours and practical solutions to address common social, economic and environmental challenges (Prandi and Lozano, 2010).

As the McKinsey report (2010) stresses, businesses today are challenged by the changing context in which businesses operate, from traditional and established, to non traditional and complex business environment; by a progressive stress on natural resources (i.e. water); by the increasing complexity of socio-economic and environmental global problems, i.e. climate change, unemployment, urbanization, insecurity, which raise the societal pressure on businesses to act and provide innovative solutions (CECP, 2010; McKinsey, 2010).

While operating in complex settings, such as conflict affected areas and fragile states¹, businesses are more exposed to issues related to human rights, sustainable development and peace building (UNGC, 2010).

Usually businesses operate in complex settings due to the opportunity of the easy access and exploitation of natural resources, cheap labour and a new and large market, often ignoring the high costs and risks associated to the increase of uncontrolled insecurity, lack of good governance and abuse of human rights (Anderson, Markides and Kupp, 2010).

Recognizing that the primary responsibility of restoring stability, security and promoting development lies with the legitimate Government, a more active and responsible participation of businesses in contributing to peace and sustainable development in conflict affected areas and fragile states is expected. Businesses are today seen as a potential partner for building peace while contributing to sustainable development and stability (UNGC, 2010). To fulfil such exigent tasks, businesses have to recognize the relevant role they can play in such complex environment, ensuring sustainable economic growth while concurrently mitigating social and environmental impacts. On the positive side, they can provide jobs, revenues, through the promotion of inclusive and local businesses; promoting better relations between communities;

¹ A **fragile state** is a low-income country characterized by weak state capacity and/or weak state legitimacy leaving citizens vulnerable to a range of shocks. **Conflict affected areas** are those in which significant socio-economic disruptions lead to weak governance, extensive damage to infrastructure, and disruption of social provision. ADB, 2012.



guiding and supporting local governments in addressing and solving social problems; contributing to national growth through their capital investments and tax revenues. On the negative side, they can easily exacerbate conflict and rivalries if they do not carefully analyse and address the conflict, its causes and impacts. In this perspective stakeholders management becomes imperative for responsible businesses, as wrong business partnerships or alliances might easily create competitions and violent confrontation. Also understanding conflicts, its causes and impacts, its dynamics and risks associated to them, become imperative if the sustainability and feasibility of businesses want to be ensured.

Overall businesses have to realize that the costs related to conflict and instability is much higher than the 'costs' of building and keeping peace (IEP, 2012).

2. *Going Beyond the State of the Art*

Please outline the fundamental challenges / issues that you are seeking to address, and explain how your idea / theme may inspire new thinking and approaches inside companies and business schools. Max 1000 character - space not included

Conceiving peace as a wider and interdisciplinary concept, finding innovative tools and strategies to address the prevention, de-escalation and solutions of conflicts, in conflict affected areas and fragile states it is not an easy task.

Traditional conflict management approaches and peace building initiatives prove to be ill prepared in front of more complex emergencies affected by new the interferences of new actors, powers' influences and political economic drivers. In these new contexts, the private sector could potentially play a crucial role in contributing to building peace, by transforming disrupted societies and economies into more sustainable and responsible ways of living.

To capture the business potentiality, a new approach which looks at the capability of businesses, in terms of expertise, technology transfer, innovation and resources, in contributing positively to peace while addressing common business and societal dilemmas, might find innovative answers to sustainable peace building. To achieve that, it is crucial that businesses are aware of the context where they operate, the direct and indirect risks related to their operations and the ways they can jointly contribute with other stakeholders to solve socio-economic and environmental problems, to foster business opportunities in line with CSR principles and standards.

By identifying business opportunities of peace, businesses would gain more benefits by implementing initiatives which foster peace and stability and help progress towards sustainable and inclusive development, with responsible practices addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges.

In this perspectives, the following research questions might be raised:

1. How can businesses contribute to building sustainable peace?
2. Is there a business case for Peace?



3. Can peace economy become a new economic model?

3. Objectives

Please describe the major goals to be pursued, with a view to influencing current models of management practice, education & development, and / or mainstream research. (These should ideally be clear, measurable, and realistic!) Max 1000 character - space not included

The Business and Peace programme addresses the potential role businesses can play, while operating in conflict affected areas and fragile countries, in contributing to the achievement of a more stable socio-economic development climate which benefits both peace conditions as well as their business sustainability and feasibility.

The programme has four components:

- academic learning through specific programmes and ad hoc training addressing the contribution of business sector to peace building as a joint effort between Nyenrode University and the UN Mandated University for Peace, Center The Hague and main campus in Costa Rica.
- applied and action research on addressing business challenges and opportunities in investing and operating in conflict affected, post-conflict and fragile states, in line with CSR principles and standards (due diligence) in close consultation and support of UNGC NL.
- conferences and seminars to raise awareness on specific themes related to the programme and which also contribute to raising awareness and knowledge on the Sustainable Development Goal 16 within the scope of the UNGC Business4Peace Initiative.
- building strategic partnerships, engaging the business sector, both international and local, Nyenrode University, UPEACE, UNGC network, and civil society organizations in contributing to the development and implementation of the programme Business&Peace.

The programme will be operated in close cooperation with other organizations, institutes and knowledge centers which share similar values and principles.

4. Anticipated value and impact

Please outline the main expected benefits to corporate members and academic partners in this initiative, and - where possible- some key indicators which would allow value and impact to be measured over time.

In today's global market, where technology transfer and connectedness are increasing, businesses are more and more exposed to non-traditional markets which are directly and indirectly affected by conflict, weak governance and unfamiliar business environments.



For businesses is imperative to learn more about the business risks and opportunities associated to these new contexts and to be prepared on preventing and addressing potential undesirable impacts which might undermine the feasibility and profitability of their operations.

At the same time for the Academia, learning and designing new approaches on how businesses can contribute to peace, i.e. SDG 16, is a new area of research which needs immediate attention.

Linking business opportunities and risks to peace building might contribute to addressing the fundamental question of “Is there a business case for peace?” which not only can help addressing operational and practical challenges which prevent businesses in investing in these complex contexts, but can also provide new tools and policy recommendations to promote more sustainable and effective methods of building sustainable peace processes and resolve conflicts.

5. Funding Scheme

Please indicate your preferred Source of Funding (where relevant): EU, Corporate, Foundations (max 1000 words)

And what you are looking for at the Forum : Partners, Information, support in Proposal writing

Sources of funding: combination of both public (EC or bilateral donor) and corporate funding. Public funding should be triggered by the interest and commitment of the private sector in responsibly investing in those complex contexts where their operations take place. At the same time public sources should aim at fostering practical research to identify the bottlenecks which undermine business sector in investing responsibly in these contexts.

At the Forum, we would like to assess the potential interest in the idea; identify potential corporate and academic partners; and eventual support in proposal writing.

6. General Theme (Choose at least one)

Education

Research

Training



KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/> Social entrepreneurship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Development
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Right	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training, Research
<input type="checkbox"/> Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Strategy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/> Development
<input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sustainability
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> SMEs
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Style, Sociology	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy
<input type="checkbox"/> Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Competitiveness
<input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/> Cross-sector and Society Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> Developing Countries
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate Social Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance
<input type="checkbox"/> Ethics, Human Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Circular Economy,
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Model	<input type="checkbox"/> Smart Cities,
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Water,
	<input type="checkbox"/> Big Data

7. Administrative information:

Information of Person Submitting the Project idea

Title:	Gender:
First name:	Last name:
Email:	
Position:	
Department:	
Street:	
Town:	Post code:



Country		
Website:		Personal Website:
Twitter:	Facebook:	LinkedIn:
Work Phone:	Mobile:	Other: