

BRIEFING PAPER



# BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

THE CASE OF CARGILL AND CARE

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**BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY**

# ABOUT



## CARGILL

Cargill's 155,000 employees across 70 countries work to achieve its purpose of nourishing the world in a safe, responsible and sustainable way. Every day, the company connects farmers with markets, customers with ingredients, and people and animals with the food they need to thrive. We combine 153 years of experience with new technologies and insights to serve as a trusted partner for food, agriculture, financial and industrial customers in more than 125 countries.

[www.cargill.com](http://www.cargill.com)

## CARE

CARE was founded in 1945, when 22 American organisations came together to rush lifesaving CARE Packages to survivors of World War II. Today they are an International NGO global leader, reaching over 65 million people each year, within a worldwide movement dedicated to ending poverty. Their mission: 'to save lives, defeat poverty and achieve social justice'.

[www.care.org](http://www.care.org)

## BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY

With its origins dating back to 2005, Business Fights Poverty has grown into the world's largest business-led collaboration network focused on social impact. Business Fights Poverty harnesses the power of collaboration to help pioneering international businesses access the insights and relationships they need to unlock new opportunities for social impact.

[www.businessfightspoverty.org](http://www.businessfightspoverty.org)

# FOREWORD

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—the internationally-agreed goals for people and planet—encapsulate a vision for the world we want to see. It is widely recognised that if we are to deliver on this vision, and defend progress already made, we must all—business, civil society and government—partner more effectively and more deeply than ever.

Cargill and CARE's 50-year partnership offers insights and lessons for anyone looking to build an effective and long-term partnership. In this Briefing Paper, we describe how the partnership has evolved from a primarily philanthropic relationship to one that, especially over the past 10 years, has genuinely drawn on the capabilities, skills and resources of the two partners. Based on interviews with experts across Cargill and CARE, both centrally and in country offices, we explore what the

benefits (and challenges) have been and distil lessons across five pillars for scaling and creating lasting impact through corporate-NGO partnerships.

This is the start of an important conversation. We share the Cargill-CARE story in the spirit of learning, and look forward to learning from your own experiences of building partnerships to deliver the ambition of the SDGs.



**Zahid Torres-Rahman**

Founder and CEO,  
Business Fights Poverty



**Michelle Grogg**

Vice-President, Corporate  
Responsibility & Sustainable  
Development, Cargill



**Marcela Hahn**

Associate Vice President,  
Strategic Partnerships,  
CARE USA

# SECTION 1

## THE PARTNERSHIP

*“A STRONGER COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION IS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS”*

2017 progress report on SDG 17<sup>1</sup>

*“If you’re a supplier you deliver something in a fixed period of time. A partnership is a **win-win**, where you both want to achieve a shared goal and you keep going to achieve this. It’s like one plus one equals three. Our partnership [with CARE] is like a **good marriage**, we each put things in to invest in a common purpose...and **the projects are like the babies** from this marriage, we are both invested and care about them.”*

Members of the Cargill Central American Team

In September 2015, 193 countries agreed upon the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The final Goal, number 17, formally calls for a “...revitalization of the global partnership for sustainable development.” In particular, for more “...multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the SDGs in all countries, in particular developing countries.”<sup>2</sup>

Creating and maintaining a balanced and impactful partnership is tough. Many fail, and many others remain narrow and transactional. Yet some manage to be bold, ambitious and long-term, rooted in deep, authentic relationships, offering the potential of transformational change.

This Brief explores the story of one such ambitious, long-term partnership—that of Cargill and CARE—that has evolved over a 50-year period from transactional and narrow to strategic, integrated and potentially transformative. Based on

<sup>1</sup> UN. (2017). 2017 Progress Report on SDG 17. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17>

<sup>2</sup> UN. Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/>

first-hand accounts of those involved, the Brief unpacks the benefits (and challenges) along with a set of lessons for those interested in transitioning to corporate-NGO partnerships which deliver scale and create lasting impact.

Through interviews with staff of both organisations, centrally and at the country level, we focus on the last ten years of CARE and Cargill's 50-year corporate-NGO partnership.

## THE CARGILL AND CARE STORY

CARE and Cargill have built a deep, long-term and ambitious partnership. Together they focus on tackling poverty in developing countries,<sup>3</sup> working towards enhancing farmer productivity, creating gender-equitable systems, increasing market access and providing education on food and nutrition security. This approach uses Cargill's expertise in food, agriculture and supply chains combined with CARE's in rural development and engagement. The partnership encourages self-sufficiency and strengthens communities.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the story though is the evolution the partnership has been through, from its initial philanthropic focus to a deeper one that leverages the core competencies of each organisation.

Over 50 years ago, Cargill began to donate funds to CARE for international food parcels: packages, carrying Cargill's name squarely printed on the outside, were sent to hospitals, orphanages and other locations in some of the poorest regions of the time.

*"We received some food from a contribution you made for starving ones overseas," said Choon-Sung, who ran a Korean orphanage that received CARE Packages sponsored by Cargill, in a letter received c. 1965. "Thank you for it from the bottom of our hearts. When we received it from you, with whom we are not acquainted, we were deeply touched by your kindness."*<sup>4</sup>

From this philanthropic beginning the relationship continued, that is until former CARE CEO, Peter Bell, began to ask how they could better share their respective capabilities and benefit more from the relationship, beyond money.

*"He wanted to know how he could tap into our [Cargill's] HR expertise. It wasn't an ask for money, but an ask for expertise,"* explains Michelle Grogg, Vice-President, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Cargill, who is a longstanding member of the partnership team.

In the process of exploring how CARE and Cargill could better share their knowhow, the relationship deepened and opportunities broadened.

The result: in 2008 CARE and Cargill formally and publicly announced the

<sup>3</sup> The partnership is active in: Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia and Nicaragua

<sup>4</sup> Cargill. (1965). Cargill News. January 1965. Pg 13

next chapter in their partnership, one of strategic, joined-up collaboration with shared goals. The five-year, \$10 million [Rural Development Initiative](#) was then launched, and was further extended in 2013 and 2016. The scope of the partnership was to tackle some of the toughest challenges facing rural agricultural communities and to build long-term, sustainable solutions. The focus was on implementation in communities where Cargill had a business presence and where CARE had strong local teams, since the aim was to build local capacity and ensure engagement from Cargill businesses.

***The strategic objectives of the partnership are to:***

- *Increase the quantity and quality of production by smallholder farmers*
- *Increase the access to equitable markets by linking farmers to formal private-sector business supply and distribution chains*
- *Improve the food security and nutrition within the identified communities.*

***Over the course of their partnership, the social impact successes include:***

- *farmers in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua involved in the Nourishing the Future programme increasing their household income between 22 and 50%;*
- *in Ghana's Prosperous Cocoa-Farming Communities, 2,180 Village Saving and Loans Association members saving more than \$112,000 combined; and*
- *in India's Kutch Livelihood and Education Advancement Project, the partnership linking 5,594 milk producers with the formal dairy market, with farmers selling more than 5.1 million litres of milk, leading to a two-fold increase in profit and a 182% increase in income.*

In total, in a decade, the partnership has reached 2.2 million people in ten countries with investments of over \$25 million.



# CARGILL & CARE PARTNERSHIP EVOLUTION



## SECTION 2

# THE BENEFITS

In our analysis of the partnership, and building on existing research,<sup>5</sup> we were keen to go beyond the social impact benefits of the programme, to understand the benefits to the organisations themselves. Making the case to internal leadership teams, and colleagues more generally, was key to maintaining momentum and the level of investment over the long term within both Cargill and CARE, and therefore to the deepening of the partnership's impact.



*Based on interviews with Cargill and CARE staff, we have distilled six key benefits that they have experienced during their partnership.*

***“The level of investment in this partnership would not have been made if we didn't have a really deep business case.”***

- Taryn Barclay, Senior Director,  
Strategic Partnerships and  
Stakeholder Engagement, Cargill

<sup>5</sup> The Partnering Initiative. (2018). Maximising the impact of partnerships for the SDGs: A practical guide to partnership value creation



## CARGILL THE CORPORATE

THE  
BENEFIT

## CARE THE NGO

NGO PARTNERSHIPS CAN BE COST EFFECTIVE, IF COMPARED TO A SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP, WHEN THE OUTCOMES ARE LONG-TERM OR INTANGIBLE. THIS CAN INCLUDE THE WILLINGNESS TO WORK THROUGH FAILURE, TRIAL NEW SOLUTIONS, SHARE RISKS AND PERSEVERE FOR SHARED OUTCOMES.

*“We have worked over the years to strengthen the goals and outcomes of our partnership and ensure we are aligned with our business priorities.”*

**Michelle Grogg**, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Cargill

*“We are cocoa bean buyers and processors. Working together with CARE we are able to utilize expertise that we may not have internally. With this we are able to more successfully achieve positive impacts in the communities in which we do business.”*

**Kate Clancy**, Sustainability Manager, Cargill Cocoa & Chocolate, Cargill

FINANCIAL

MONEY, PARTICULARLY UNRESTRICTED FUNDS INVESTED OVER LONG PERIODS OF TIME, ENABLES CORE GROWTH AND CAPACITY INVESTMENT, WHILST ONE SUCCESSFUL CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP CAN LEAD TO OTHERS.

*“Cargill’s funding and commercial expertise dramatically accelerate our shared impact.”*

**Marcela Hahn**, Assistant Vice President, Strategic Partnerships, CARE

*“Cargill is one of the best business development strategies we have had. They have referred and recommended many of their corporate customers to us.”*

**Joan Garvey Lundgren**, Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships, CARE USA

TRUSTED AND RESPECTED NGOS WITH STRONG REPUTATIONS CAN OPEN DOORS TO AND BUILD RELATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS THAT CORPORATE BUSINESS COULD FIND HARD TO REACH.

*“CARE are so good at stakeholder engagement, they know their mission and are well respected—they can help when it comes to stakeholder engagement, in some ways reducing the risk we might perceive.”*

**Ana Zavala**, CSR and Communications Coordinator, Cargill, Nicaragua

*“We look to include and involve the communities from the outset of all activities, they determine what needs doing and together we work out how to move forward. Likewise, we include local governments wherever possible, from the healthcare services to the education teams.”*

**Theophilus Nkansah**, Project Manager and Team Leader, CARE, Ghana

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT,  
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

BUSINESSES WILL OFTEN HAVE THE MARKETING REACH MOST NGOS CAN ONLY DREAM OF.

*“Through our alliance with Cargill, we have benefited from reach and scope of one of the largest multinational agricultural companies—from connections, to new partners, to the support of many thousands of Cargill employees around the world.”*

**Joan Garvey Lundgren**, Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships, CARE USA

**CARGILL**  
THE CORPORATE

THE  
BENEFIT

**CARE**  
THE NGO

PROPOSITION DEVELOPMENT  
& INNOVATION

WHEN CORPORATE NGO PARTNERSHIPS ARE UNITED WITH BUSINESS ACTIVITIES, THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, AND TRIAL NEW BUSINESS MODELS

*“CARE has brought new smallholder farmers and suppliers into our [Cargill’s] value chain. Without CARE this would have been very difficult.”*

**Liliana Barahona**, CSR Coordinator, Cargill, Honduras and Guatemala

*“The intangible benefits, such as supply chain strengthening, are vitally important elements that make up our return on investment for this partnership.”*

**Taryn Barclay**, Senior Director, Strategic Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement, Cargill

LONGER-TERM SUPPORT OF A BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP ENABLES DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PROGRAMMES, CAN EXTEND REACH INTO NEW REGIONS AND CAN SCALE EXISTING SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS.

*On the long-standing work together to support cocoa producers in West Africa: “Cargill’s business there has been intimately involved in the work—providing technical assistance to farmers, etc. They have also helped CARE to understand the business and market context, which informs our strategies. In the case of cocoa, we saw that women play a significant role yet are largely unrecognized. By focusing our efforts on supporting them, we see a clearer path to overcoming long-entrenched challenges.”*

**Joan Garvey Lundgren**, Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships, CARE USA

*“The association has allowed greater coverage in geographical areas: communities, schools, organisations of small producers and associations of microentrepreneurs, where we were not present.”*

**José Antonio Saucedo**, Regional Manager, Central America, CARE

KNOWLEDGE &  
HORIZON SCANNING

SOCIAL ISSUES ARE CORPORATE RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES. NGO INSIGHT AND PROGRAMME INFORMATION CAN COMPLEMENT AND DEEPEN HORIZON SCANNING.

*“We have learnt from CARE’s approaches in engagement and they have helped to deepen our social understanding. For example, they have expert insight into the impacts of working to empower women, how by doing this you raise the whole family out of poverty and in the process help to make their farms more productive.”*

**Michelle Grogg**, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Cargill

*“CARE helps us to understand the risks in existing locations [in which Cargill works]. We rely on information from CARE to make long-term and strategic decisions.”*

**Taryn Barclay**, Senior Director, Strategic Partnerships and Stakeholder Relations, Cargill

COMMERCIAL INSIGHT AND ECONOMIC SHIFTS AFFECT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. CORPORATE PARTNERS OFTEN HAVE THIS KNOWLEDGE EARLY AND CONTEXTUALISED.

*“The partnership supports us towards getting a much better understanding of market dynamics and issues at play; helping to identify the leverage points at which CARE can influence and play a role, and work within the economic system to really drive sustainable change.”*

**Joan Garvey Lundgren**, Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships, CARE USA

## CARGILL THE CORPORATE

THE  
BENEFIT

## CARE THE NGO

ADVOCACY PARTNERSHIPS WITH NGOS CAN SUPPORT GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ACTIVITIES, AND INFLUENCE LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DECISION-MAKING AND PUBLIC POLICY.<sup>7</sup>

*“The benefits of this partnership reach beyond our two organisations. By being transparent about what we do and sharing our knowledge and experience we hope to contribute to informing the wider public.”*

**Kate Clancy**, Sustainability Manager,  
Cargill Cocoa & Chocolate, Cargill

ADVOCACY

ADDING CORPORATE VOICES IN SUPPORT OF GOOD SOCIAL POLICY OR INVESTMENT CAN TIP THE BALANCE AND CREATE CHANGE.

*“There is no denying the effectiveness of INGO and private sector advocacy partnerships. It can be tough to make the case for global development to legislators when they are very focused on domestic and hometown issues. When we can demonstrate to legislators that not only is a particular policy initiative or action the right thing to do, but also supported by businesses—the addition of the private sector argument can be very persuasive.”*

**Rachael Leman**, Executive Director, CARE Action

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, AS WELL AS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT, ARE ALL AREAS THAT BUSINESSES INVEST IN. EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT WITH SOCIAL PROGRAMMES HAS BEEN SHOWN TO POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO ALL THESE AREAS.<sup>8</sup>

*“As a recruiting tool, younger employees are looking to work for a company that is doing good in the community and provides an opportunity to contribute.”<sup>9</sup>*

**Martha Gonzalez**, HR Lead in Central America, Cargill

*“When we have our employees on the ground, visible in their bright orange Cargill shirts, we’re sending a message to the communities. We aren’t just an anonymous multinational company. We are part of your country, we are committed to being here and we want to thrive together.”*

**Maria Nelly Rivas**, Central America Corporate  
Responsibility Manager, Cargill

PEOPLE

EMPLOYEES FROM CORPORATE PARTNERS CAN BE VOLUNTEERS, LONG-TERM CONTRIBUTORS TO SOCIAL EFFORTS, PROFESSIONAL EXPERTS, ADVISERS, ADVOCATES OR FUTURE BOARD MEMBERS.

*“Some of CARE’s most dedicated volunteers in the U.S. are retired Cargill employees.”*

**Joan Garvey Lundgren**, Executive Director,  
Strategic Partnerships, CARE USA

*“...younger employees are looking to work for a company that is doing good in the community and provides an opportunity to contribute.”*

<sup>7</sup> S. Shepers. (2001). Business government relations: beyond lobbying. Corporate Governance: The international journal of business in society

<sup>8</sup> M. Jacoby. (2015). 4 Ways Workplace Giving/Volunteering Can Drive Employee Engagement [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/margaret-jacoby/4-ways-workplace-giving-vo\\_b\\_8602428.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/margaret-jacoby/4-ways-workplace-giving-vo_b_8602428.html)

<sup>9</sup> E. Kaiser. (2017). Good Business. Cargill News. Q3 February 2017

## SECTION 3 THE LESSONS

A great deal has been written about what makes for a successful partnership.<sup>10</sup> In our experience, however, not all partnerships are equal: some are primarily short-term and **transactional**, while others are long term and offer the potential to be **transformational**.<sup>11</sup> While there is a place for the former, the latter offers greater stability, the exciting prospect of scale and lasting impact, and the flexibility to tackle ambitious and complex challenges where there is uncertainty about the exact pathway to addressing them.

*A key question is:  
what does it take  
for transformational  
partnerships to  
succeed?*

***“The relationship that you build over time—getting to know an organisation gives you confidence to try new things.”***

- Taryn Barclay, Senior Director, Strategic Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement, Cargill

<sup>10</sup> See for example the articles and stories posted by Business Fights Poverty members on the topic of ‘partnership’ here: <https://businessfightspoverty.org/activities/?category=partnerships-zone&region=#articles>

<sup>11</sup> Transactional partnerships might include, for example, a company contracting the services of an NGO to deliver smallholder farmer support, while an example of a transformational partnership might be a company and NGO setting a joint, long-term goal for improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.



*We draw out lessons across five pillars, with the hope that this might prove useful for others wanting to build effective, long-term corporate-NGO partnerships.*

## THE SUCCESS FACTORS BEHIND LONG-TERM CORPORATE-NGO PARTNERSHIPS

The infographic below describes the typically-cited success factors of transactional partnerships, as compared to those we tend to see in partnerships that result in more transformational outcomes. As partnerships evolve, we observe a ‘dialling up’ of the success factors across five pillars: towards one that involves convening partners around an ambitious shared **purpose** in a way that drives mutual **value**; a **process** that is based on co-creation; and an authentic approach to both **internal communication** and **external communication**. This resonates strongly with the experience of the Cargill and CARE partnership.

The bottom line is that many of these factors reflect the deeper, authentic relationship that the two organisations have managed to build up over time. In fact, if there is one overarching message from our wider experience, and that of others,<sup>12</sup> it is that **relationships are key to the evolution and success of transformational partnerships.**

Importantly, the success factors for transactional partnerships may not be enough for transformational ones.

The Cargill-CARE partnership evolved into an example of a long-term, potentially transformational partnership, and studying it gave us the opportunity to delve deeper into its success factors, and how these might differ from more traditional, transactional partnerships.

Based on interviews with Cargill and CARE staff, both centrally and at the country level, we were given a unique insight into what makes the partnership tick. We draw out lessons across five pillars, with the hope that this might prove useful for others wanting to build effective, long-term corporate-NGO partnerships.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, The Partnering Initiative. <https://thepartneringinitiative.org/>

# SUCCESS FACTORS OF TRANSACTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



## PURPOSE

PLUS:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Clearly defined programme objective, and tangible inputs and outputs</b></li> <li>● <b>Clear deadlines</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Convening the right partners</b> around a clear and compelling focus</li> <li>● <b>Shared commitment</b> to an ambitious outcome, connected to the core priorities of each partner</li> <li>● <b>Long-term commitment</b> to achieving the outcome, even where there might be uncertainty over how to get there.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



## VALUE

PLUS:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Clear key performance indicators</b> as part of a monitoring and evaluation framework</li> <li>● <b>Regular reporting</b></li> <li>● <b>Clear focus on programme impacts</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Genuine shared and clearly-articulated benefits for all partners</b>, including the business value to the company alongside the wider societal value, and an understanding of the advantage of taking a collaborative approach to the issue</li> <li>● <b>Joint horizon scanning</b> to deepen the shared understanding of the socio-economic context and root causes of the challenges being addressed</li> <li>● <b>Joint development of the monitoring and evaluation framework</b> focused on continuous listening, learning and improvement.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|



## PROCESS

- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Accountability for delivery of activities and results

*PLUS:*

- **Partnerships based on core competencies** and mutual respect for capabilities and perspectives of each partner
- **Integration of partnership** within each organisation which allows for opportunities and innovation to surface from unlikely places
- **Agile approach** with openness to failure and working together to course-correct.



## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- Regular, transparent conversations within the programme team focused on delivery

*PLUS:*

- **Time invested and skills developed to build and nurture trust-based relationships** across partners and beyond the partnership team
- **Deep understanding of one another's culture**
- **Safe space for constructive criticism** and dialogue addressing risks and reputational issues.



## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- Jointly agreed external positions on the partnership
- Shared external representation on platforms

*PLUS:*

- **Willingness to share lessons** of both success and challenges faced
- **Joint advocacy** around shared priorities and wider systemic challenges
- **Leveraging each other's networks** and channels for wider benefit.



## PURPOSE

Having a shared purpose and long-term goals may require deeper understanding between partners and take time to establish, but they enable partners to bring all their expertise, allow the flexibility and space to take advantage of new opportunities, and ensure commitment for the long term.

***“If you’re a supplier, you deliver something in a fixed period of time. A partnership is a win-win, where you both want to achieve a shared goal”***

### KEY LESSONS:

- *Take the time necessary to find the right partners, learn about each other’s objectives and drivers, and identify where there is the greatest alignment of interest*
- *Identify an ambitious, shared outcome to which partners can commit*
- *Commit to the long term, despite the fact that the pathway may not be perfectly defined*
- *Remain flexible about the exact pathway to getting there.*

### CARE & CARGILL ON PURPOSE:

**Ana Zavala**, CSR and Communications Coordinator, Nicaragua, Cargill: *“If you’re a supplier, you deliver something in a fixed period of time. A partnership is a win-win, where you both want to achieve a shared goal and you keep going to achieve this. It’s like one plus one equals three.”*

**Joan Garvey Lundgren**, Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships, CARE USA: *“CARE’s approach to private sector engagement necessitates that we deeply understand the business priorities of our partners, while never ever compromising the interests of the communities we serve. We strive to create corporate partnerships that are a pathway for transformational change and opportunity for poor communities—especially women.”*

**Blanca Villela**, Central America, Colombia, Cargill: *“Needs are unlimited, resources are limited; our aim is to find the best ways to leverage our collective resources to amplify and multiply our positive impact.”*





## VALUE

Transformational partnerships understand the value of the partnership as well as the outcomes through impact measurement and reporting. Based on a transparent understanding of the benefits to the partners and the people they are ultimately trying to serve, they allow for an ongoing conversation about how to continuously improve and create longer lasting, deeper impact.

### KEY LESSONS:

- *Set out clearly the expected benefits for partners; monitor—and adapt—these over time*
- *Communicate the partnering and social impact benefits and challenges internally and with community members*
- *During any negotiations focus on increasing the collective value of the partnership*
- *Build a shared understanding of the challenges and the impact being sought*
- *Jointly develop the M&E framework and approach, and use results to learn and improve*
- *Identify wider social, economic and environmental opportunities and risks through horizon scanning—actively monitoring factors outside of the expected benefits.*

### CARE & CARGILL ON VALUE:

**Michelle Grogg**, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Cargill: *“We have worked over the years to strengthen the goals and outcomes of our partnership and ensure we are aligned with our business priorities. Ultimately, we want to show how partnerships like these are helping Cargill achieve its purpose to nourish the world in a safe, responsible and sustainable way.”*

**Maria Hinson Tobin**, Technical Advisor, Private Sector Engagement, CARE. *“After the first five years [of the strategic partnership] we realised there was a lot of data not being captured— it was difficult to say what our impact was globally.” -*

**Kate Clancy**, Sustainability Manager, Cargill Cocoa & Chocolate, Cargill: *“Our partnership with CARE has certainly changed how Cargill does business. Thanks to CARE and the strong monitoring, evaluation and learning ethos we have, we continuously gain valuable insights on important issues such as gender equality. For example, learning about the strong link farmer productivity has with happy homes, empowering women and strong communities.”*



## PROCESS

Long-term partnerships effectively embed themselves within the partner organisations, from champions across the organisation to cross-functional connections. This builds engagement more deeply into the organisations and allows the opportunity for new innovations and insights to emerge. With stronger engagement and commitment, these partnerships are more resilient and able to better manage setbacks and failures. Difficult times come to all partnerships; how partners respond, separately or together, is an important indicator of your relationship status.



### KEY LESSONS:

- *Take time to understand the capabilities and perspectives of each partner*
- *Build relationships beyond the partnership team across both organisations, seek out and nurture senior champions and generate shared ownership of the partnership across the organisations*
- *Encourage innovation and be open to ideas from all stakeholders from within the partners, and beyond*
- *Encourage a constructive attitude to failure: a shared understanding that failure can often mean innovation, and that new boundaries are being set, and responsibility shared with partners to address failures and draw lessons.*

## CARE & CARGILL ON PROCESS:

**Liliana Barahona**, CSR Coordinator, Honduras and Guatemala, Cargill: *“Ten years with CARE enables us to learn how to respond in a personalised way, to innovate—try new things, and replicate and scale programmes, sharing learnings and improve.”*

**Michelle Grogg**, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Cargill: *“We agreed from the beginning [of our strategic phase of the partnership] that it was okay to fail, that if things didn’t work, we’d take a deeper look and invest in the problem to address it together. [And] it’s not about innovation, sometimes the best thing is to let go and learn from others. Bringing scale to interventions that are already working and co-investing to bring more people to the table can be more impactful.”*

**Taryn Barclay**, Senior Director, Strategic Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement, Cargill: *“Our work in Brazil for example was quite finite; we went in as a partnership, delivered what was needed. Together we determined that our resources were more impactful in other places. After 10 years there are some countries that are the same and some that are new.”*

When a community engagement approach wasn’t working in Ghana, Theophilus Nkansah, Project Manager and Team Leader, CARE explains: *“We discussed a new approach with Cargill which was agreed—the use of Community*

**“Ten years with CARE enables us to learn how to respond in a personalised way, to innovate—try new things, and replicate and scale programmes, sharing learnings and improve.”**

*Development Committees (CDC). The CDCs comprised representatives of all identifiable groups in the community—chief and elders, youth, women, religious groups, unit committees. These were selected at a community forum by the entire community, trained and given the mandate to spearhead all development activities in the community. The model is working very well and already yielding significant results.”*

**José Antonio Saucedo**, Regional Manager, Honduras, CARE: *“One of the challenges we faced was that as we rolled out the project to new regions, we had to ensure that the approach was adapted to meet the local needs and expectations, and to the specific local legislative and institutional context.”*



## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

In a transformational partnership, communication is more than talking to one another, it's about honest feedback, and having trust, respect and equality between partners; creating space to enable your partner to become your critical friend and trusted adviser.

***“Cargill have approached this as a team—a partnership like this needs a team approach and a key relationship manager”***



### KEY LESSONS:

- *Invest in the human relationships that underpin the partnership*
- *Develop a deep understanding of each other's organisational culture, internal systems and politics, whilst creating approaches to deal with friction due to organisational cultural differences*
- *Encourage an open, transparent and regular dialogue, including beyond the partnership team*
- *Invite and offer constructive, critical feedback to partners, and create a safe space for them to do the same*
- *Take the time to explore opportunities and risks beyond the boundaries of the partnership activities.*

## CARE & CARGILL ON INTERNAL COMMUNICATION:

**Taryn Barclay**, Senior Director, Strategic Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement, Cargill: *“The relationship is built beyond one person. It’s not just our corporate team working on this [at Cargill], it is the teams on the ground.”*

**Joan Garvey Lundgren**, Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships, CARE USA, on difficult topics: *“We have an open, proactive dialogue.”*

**Michelle Grogg**, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Cargill: *“Cargill have approached this as a team—a partnership like this needs a team approach and a key relationship manager. We treat CARE as though they are a ‘key client’. And CARE have done the same for us, with their willingness to invest time and resources into the relationship. We agreed from the beginning to be candid. We can agree to disagree and we will always keep the lines of communication open. It took us time to learn each other’s language. For example, we kept hearing that we needed to invest in ‘capacity building’ but we didn’t really understand what this meant on the ground. Now we know that we need to put time and resources into upfront community engagement, to understand what the community wants and needs and to enable them to lead their solutions.”*



**José Antonio Saucedo**, Regional Manager, Central America, CARE: *“[We] work with value chains, connecting not only the CSR area but also the business [people] of the company to the beneficiaries of the project.”*

**Kate Clancy**, Sustainability Manager, Cargill Cocoa & Chocolate, Cargill: *“We want to remain impactful in a dynamic and ever-changing environment. To do so, it’s crucial that we continue to challenge each other on how we make a difference on the ground.”*



## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The power of influence and societal impact that can be achieved when corporates and NGOs publicly join forces is only just coming to the forefront; from corporate-NGO advocacy partnerships calling for policy change, to joint marketing campaigns and the harnessing of brands to address social norms.<sup>13</sup>



### KEY LESSONS:

- *Invest in sharing stories about the partnership and its impact—to reinforce benefits, share learnings from challenges faced, and create positive feedback loops*
- *Regularly engage with partners on policy issues relevant to the partnership and the partners*
- *Identify opportunities for joint advocacy relevant to the outcome focus of the partnership, including around systemic issues related to the purpose of the partnership*
- *Explore ways to leverage other channels—such as brand and marketing, or peer networks and relationships—to support external advocacy*
- *Look for opportunities to amplify the impact of the partnership, for example by connecting partners to other peers and stakeholders in your network.*

<sup>13</sup> Business Fights Poverty. (2018). Advocating Together for the SDGs. <https://businessfightspoverty.org/articles/joint-civil-society-business-advocacy-is-emerging-as-a-powerful-tool-to-drive-policy-change-in-support-of-the-sdgs/>

***“The work with Cargill has really challenged us to look at the larger context and engage with multiple partners.”***

## **CARE & CARGILL ON EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

**Theophilus Nkansah**, Project Manager and Team Leader, Ghana CARE: *“The work with Cargill has really challenged us to look at the larger context and engage with multiple partners.”*

**Michelle Grogg**, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Cargill: *“Our partnership is special because of how holistic it is. It goes from the top, we have advocated jointly with Michelle Nunn [CARE USA CEO] for better food and nutrition security. Together we work with local governments in many countries, with customers, with employees, with schools, with smallholder farmers and with communities.”*

**Michelle Grogg**, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Cargill: *“Share learnings and share stories—it is something which took us too long to do.”*

**Angie Céspedes**, CSR Coordinator, Costa Rica, Cargill: *“Sometimes CARE will be able to bring in other external funds or partners to help us deepen our impacts. We are keen to make alliances, whether with other businesses, NGOs or local government so that we can together deliver what the community needs.”*

**Rachael Leman**, Executive Director, CARE Action: *“We asked Cargill to be the first company to join our advocacy partnership network, something we internally call our ‘Kitchen Cabinet’. We asked Cargill because we had worked together for so long, we knew each other well, we have built up trust with each other, we know where we have areas of common ground. And they said yes. Their leadership meant that other businesses found it easier to join too. We work on areas where we have shared advocacy topics, such as Women’s Economic Empowerment and Food and Nutrition.”*

***“We can’t do it alone. We [at Cargill] have an important role to play, but we must do it together with others. In my view, SDG number 17 is the most important. Without partnerships and working together none of the other Sustainable Development Goals will be realised.”***

- Michelle Grogg, Vice-President, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Cargill



## **ABOUT BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY**

With its origins dating back to 2005, Business Fights Poverty has grown into one of the world’s largest business-led collaboration networks focused on social impact. Business Fights Poverty has launched a wide variety of Challenge-based collaborations with many of the world’s leading companies, civil society organisations and development agencies.

