Beyond CSR? Business, poverty and social justice: an introduction

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Abstract How far can Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives help to address poverty, social exclusion and other development challenges? What is the balance of responsibilities between state, market and civil society in addressing these problems and meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)? What new tools, strategies and methodologies are required to harness the positive potential contribution of business to development and deter corporate irresponsibility? This special issue brings together a dynamic mix of academics and development specialists to address these themes in a focused and innovative way. In this introductory article, we consider some of the key cross-cutting themes and insights raised by the contributions. The aim of the introduction and the special issue is to start to fill the gap in our understanding of how, when and through what means business can help to reduce poverty, while recognising the equally powerful potential of the business community to exacerbate poverty. Taking particular CSR initiatives as a starting point, we seek to look at the broader developmental footprint of business-as-usual strategies, as well as those which fall under the banner of CSR, to gain a fuller picture of how business is implicated in the development process.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been adopted as an approach to international development. But who does it benefit, how and why? Does CSR have the potential to redefine the meaning of good business practice as meeting the needs of poor and marginalised groups? Or is there a danger that, by basing development policies around a business case, we fail to tackle, or worse, deepen, the multiple forms of inequality and social exclusion that characterise contemporary forms of poverty?

International organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank, and national development agencies such as the Department for International Development (DFID) in the UK, have embraced CSR in the hope that the private sector can play a key role in achieving developmental goals aimed at poverty alleviation. The UK’s DFID is confident that, ‘By following socially responsible
practices, the growth generated by the private sector will be more inclusive, equitable and poverty reducing.¹ The idea that the market is a critical vehicle for tackling poverty is emphasised both in DFID’s report ‘Making Market Systems Work Better for the Poor’² and in the report *Unleashing Entrepreneurship: Making Business Work for the Poor* by the Commission on the Private Sector and Development, convened by former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan.³

At the same time there is also an emerging business case for addressing poverty directly. Within the business community the notion that there is a fortune awaiting those entrepreneurs who target their products at the ‘bottom of the pyramid’ (BOP) has recently become very influential. CK Prahalad and Stuart Hart, the key proponents of the idea, suggest that private firms can help reduce poverty, and make profits at the same time, by inventing new business models for providing products and services to the world’s poor—the four billion people who live on less than $2000 a year. It assumes that the poor have cumulatively a large amount of disposable income but that their needs are poorly served by firms, which are geared towards middle-income and high-income consumers. Therefore, partnerships with non-governmental organisations, development agencies and local communities are said to be able to help private firms to develop new markets, while providing the poor with access to markets and services.⁴ Although such an approach is not directly concerned with the broader social and environmental responsibilities of business, and its conceptualisation of poverty is itself problematic,⁵ the BOP idea echoes the focus on ‘win-win outcomes’ in contemporary CSR debates, namely the assumption that CSR can contribute to the welfare of ‘stakeholders’ while contributing to a firm’s financial bottom line. This win-win logic is dramatically emphasised in the title of the recent book by Craig and Peter Wilson: *Make Poverty Business: Increase Profits and Reduce Risks by Engaging with the Poor*.⁶

However, while there are clearly zones of compatibility between business-led CSR initiatives and efforts by the development community to engage business in efforts to tackle poverty, CSR as a business tool is distinct from CSR as a development tool. CSR emerged among leading firms and business schools as a public relations tool, a way to deflect criticism, engage critics and potentially capitalise on emerging business opportunities associated with doing, and being seen to be doing, good. This is a far cry, however, from constructing corporate strategies that are aligned with the pressing need to tackle poverty and social exclusion across the majority world. Despite recent interest in ‘new’ business models such as ‘bottom of the pyramid’, which present the business case for viewing poorer consumers as a huge untapped market for products targeted to their needs, poverty more often enters business thinking as a problem. For instance, firms producing and trading in oil or diamonds often operate in conflict zones, or areas of social unrest over contested land rights and resource revenues. There is a clear difference then between redefining the poor as business opportunity and viewing the poor as a problem, either an obstacle to smooth-running business operations or, more often than not, someone else’s problem, normally the government’s.
Some argue that deliberate interventions by governments and donors aimed at harnessing business towards the aims of poverty alleviation are misplaced, since business already contributes in the most direct way it can to poverty reduction efforts through ‘business-as-usual’ investments, employment and payment of taxation. Glover, in his paper, cites a senior executive from Monsanto who reflects: ‘One of the conclusions that I’ve come to is that 99.9 per cent of our impact [among smallholders] is through our business activities. Even if we stopped [the philanthropic programmes], we’d still be achieving the 99.9 per cent’. This lends weight to the position adopted by Milton Friedman and other critics of CSR, namely that ‘the business of business is business’ and practices which deviate from that goal are misplaced and counter-productive. Indeed, recent empirically based studies by the editors of this special issue have revealed the problems businesses encounter when they attempt to intervene as social development actors in complex development environments.

Amid the rhetoric on all sides in the debate, it is becoming increasingly clear that general propositions are a poor substitute for detailed study of the specific ways in which business may, and may not, make contributions towards tackling poverty. As Michael Blowfield demonstrates in this special issue, for all the claims made about the positive and negative consequences of CSR, we still know very little about its developmental potential and claims made about CSR’s role in social and economic development are often weakly substantiated. The article by Stephanie Barrientos and Sally Smith in this issue, which emerged from work conducted for the UK Ethical Trading Initiative, provides a rare attempt to systematically investigate the impact of codes of labour practice across a range of countries.

It is also notable that, while there are decades worth of scholarship in development studies about business and development in more general terms, dating back to concerns about ‘corporate imperialism’, or the extent to which multinational firms were encroaching upon the powers of newly sovereign postcolonial states, critical analytical tools generated by these and other debates have been remarkably absent in the contemporary debate about the role of business in development. For example, there are historical parallels between contemporary efforts by activists to mobilise around the need for a UN Corporate Accountability Convention and the work of the UN Centre on Transnational Corporations, whose work was successfully undermined by leading industrial nations on behalf of their multinational firms in the 1970s and 80s. It is important both to historicise current concerns with business and development and to draw on analytical approaches, designed for other contexts, which help us to understand this latest line of enquiry into the relationship between business and poverty. While dependency and world systems theory placed emphasis on the destructive effect of negative terms of international trade and production on developing countries, more recent interest in the role of firms in development has usefully turned our attention towards inter-firm relations. As Tallontire shows here, work on supply chains which looks at issues of power in the production chain between buyers and suppliers of products is useful in understanding the
potential and limitations of standards and codes in the supply chain as tools for improving working conditions.

The aim of this special issue, therefore, is to start to fill this gap in our understanding of how, when and through what means business can help to reduce poverty, while recognising the equally powerful potential of the business community to exacerbate poverty. It consciously departs, therefore, from uncritical debates about the win-win potential of business–government or business–civil society partnerships in overcoming the barriers to development that previous decades of development have been unable to surmount. Instead, it seeks to contribute to an emerging strand of critical thinking about CSR and development. While recognising the distinct challenges that we now face in a context of globalisation and heightened corporate mobility, we are keen not to embrace exaggerated claims about the potential of business to transform the development process without careful reflection and empirical enquiry into the extent to which and the ways in which this might be possible. While taking particular CSR initiatives as a starting point, we seek to look at the broader developmental footprint of business-as-usual strategies, as well as at those which fall under the banner of CSR, to gain a fuller picture of how business is implicated in the development process: simultaneously able to ameliorate some forms of poverty while exacerbating others. We begin with some background to the current debate, before highlighting key cross-cutting themes which each of the articles in this special issue addresses in distinct ways.

**Historical challenges and contemporary context**

Business plays an increasingly important role in development. This is linked both to the decline in confidence in the role of the state as an agent for development and to global deregulation from the 1980s resulting in a more limited role for the state in the economy. Amid this restructuring key developmental functions traditionally associated with the state, such as the provision of basic infrastructure and enabling access to water, electricity, health and education, are now performed by a range of civil society and market actors. As providers of goods and services, as employers, as investors, and increasingly as shapers of developing countries’ policies, there is no doubt that the private sector is central to efforts to tackle poverty. But can this role be performed through business-as-usual practices, voluntarily and through the market, or does it need to be guided, regulated and driven by broader state-led developmental priorities? Do states still have the power to play this role?

In a context of globalisation there are concerns that businesses enjoy unprecedented power, which enables them to pressure weaker governments, to locate their enterprises in areas of weak or non-existent social and environmental regulation and to exploit poorer communities. How to harness the positive potential of business, while at the same time containing corporate irresponsibility, presents an enormous challenge for development practitioners. For many, CSR provides some of the answers with its emphasis...
on win-win solutions, partnership and voluntary responses to a range of social and environmental problems. Understanding the potential and limitations of CSR initiatives to tackle development issues is, therefore, key.

Despite attempts to formulate generally applicable definitions, there is a lack of clear consensus about what is and what is not CSR, reflecting a more fundamental debate about the appropriate role of the private firm in society.\(^{17}\) The European Commission defines CSR as ‘a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis’.\(^{18}\) Anything from environmental management, health and safety rules and human rights to community capacity building and philanthropic activities has been considered under the CSR umbrella. As one observer aptly noted, ‘CSR can be anything you want it to be’.\(^{19}\) This confusion is amplified when translated to the world of development policy, where consensus is equally lacking about how to measure and define, let alone tackle, poverty. Determining in a clear fashion the ways in which firms can alleviate or may contribute towards poverty is, therefore, a fraught task. It is apparent from contributions to this special issue that poverty is much more than lack of income. There are multiple forms of deprivation and social exclusion at work, often based on gender, race, ethnicity and class inequalities. Contributions to poverty alleviation which rest solely on the potential of business to promote growth or provide jobs are, therefore, limited in addressing underlying causes of poverty which exclude people from labour markets in the first place. Our entry point here is to suggest that different models of CSR have impacts on different types of poverty. It is to be expected that acts of philanthropy, contributions to community development, codes of conduct and compliance with international standards of best practice will yield different results, are responsive to different stakeholders and, therefore, affect the poor in distinct ways. Establishing which models benefit poorer groups most is the challenge.

We have examples in this issue of a range of CSR instruments, from localised firm-specific initiatives such as the Monsanto Smallholder Programme in India analysed in the article by Glover, to codes of conduct and global agreements discussed in the articles by Kilgour, Tallontire and Barrientos, to macro-level policy interventions such as that by BP in Azerbaijan described by Gulbrandsen and Moe. The articles cover a plethora of marginalised and excluded groups, whether women workers in the articles by Pearson, Tallontire and Kilgour, indigenous communities in Fig’s article, or resource-poor farmers in the case of Glover’s contribution. The regional spread is also impressive, with cases from countries as diverse as Azerbaijan, Brazil, India and parts of Southern and Eastern Africa. Given the diversity represented here in terms of the nature of the private sector in these countries and the varying degrees of state capacity and civil society engagement, the reader will notice the uneven development of CSR across the world and its widely varying ability to address a range of development issues, which is highly dependent on the context in question.

This suggests the need to place the debate about CSR in development in a broader context of debates about business and society. Existing research
demonstrates that some of the most significant poverty-related impacts of business have little or no direct association with the CSR activities of a firm. Business-as-usual private investment can increase employment among the poor, provide new market opportunities for smallholders, increase the access of the poor to essential services or contribute to government taxes, which can in turn be spent on anti-poverty measures. This, in some ways, confers support for the view that firms help to tackle poverty primarily in their roles as investors, employers and tax-payers and not through acts of philanthropy, adherence to global social standards or the negotiation of codes of conduct.

A more sophisticated response would be that both the CSR and non-CSR activities of firms have a bearing on poverty, even if the latter are far more significant in overall social and economic terms. One-off philanthropic projects such as building a school, a clinic or a water treatment plant can bring enormous short- and long-term benefits to a community. Even if such gestures may be aimed at placating more far-reaching and contentious community demands for a greater share of revenues earned from extracting resources, or if such projects do not always reflect the communities’ own priorities, they do nevertheless bring direct developmental gains. But such contributions are likely to be overshadowed in their importance by the economic and social effects, positive and negative, that are created by investment and employment. Whether it is altering the sustainability of local livelihoods or bringing cleaner production processes and improved technologies, displacing local industry or boosting it, fuelling war through investment in conflict zones or providing much needed resources to resolve such conflict, it is in the day-to-day management of the firm and through the taking of key investment decisions that development gains come to be realised or denied, rather than in the well intended, but isolated and discrete activities of firms in developing areas.

We have seen how much of the current debate about corporate responsibility is aimed at persuading business that there are sound financial reasons to look beyond the bottom line and to consider social and environmental responsibilities to wider society. Making the business case for helping to tackle poverty is often harder. Does CSR have relevance for addressing problems where a near-term business case cannot be made? Are there other ways to think about the role of business in development that do not rely on appeals to immediate self-interest, but instead emphasise the duties and obligations of firms to help confront problems facing the societies in which they operate? The articles in this special issue suggest there are.

The limited reach of CSR

Our previous research suggests that CSR initiatives work for some firms, in some places, in tackling some issues, some of the time. Rather than seek win-win solutions that apply across all settings, all of the time, the challenge for engaged researchers is to explore the potential and limitations of CSR in specific settings. What works in one situation may well not work elsewhere. Current CSR models assume responsive business interested in CSR, an active
civil society willing to enter into partnership with business and a strong state able to provide an enabling environment for CSR, yet these conditions are absent in the majority of the world. Despite the appeal of exportable CSR models that can be readily adapted to whichever country a business operates in, the empirical evidence presented here strongly suggests the need to assess the potential of CSR to address particular forms of poverty in the light of prevailing local political and social conditions. Working through and with civil society to deliver meaningful community development is not an option in settings of weak and under-developed civil society or where democratic space does not exist for the free expression of voice. In contexts where the state is unable even to deliver minimum levels of sanitation and infrastructure, CSR efforts in these areas may make an enormous contribution, although business may then be accused of operating like a state without the appropriate mechanisms for managing and reconciling competing societal demands. Where a firm is less export-oriented, abiding by international standards or adopting codes of conduct may make less sense. Locally oriented interventions at community level, where social capital and long-term trust are key, may make more strategic sense and yield higher developmental benefits.

Previous work by members of our International Research Network on Business, Development and Society has illustrated the importance of this diversity clearly. For example, firms in Argentina, faced with a context of financial collapse in the economy in the wake of the crisis of 2001, have increasingly been expected to get involved in programmes that tackle directly the poverty created by the crisis rather than focus exclusively on more traditional CSR concerns such as working conditions and the environment. In India, despite strong legislation on environmental issues, pollution control at state level is often weak, creating an important role for community-based monitoring and enforcement. In Nigeria, community protests and an almost total neglect of oil-producing areas by government agencies have forced foreign oil companies to invest in basic social infrastructure, including building roads, schools and hospitals, performing state-like roles which would be inconceivable and perhaps considered illegitimate in other countries. In China, there is a strong state but weak levels of civil society development, so that independent monitoring of working conditions presents a difficult, sometimes dangerous, task. In Bangladesh, dependence on the garment industry raises a particular set of issues for the women and child workers that make up the majority of employees in the sector, for whom viable employment alternatives are hard to find. In South Africa, the unique legacy of apartheid has meant that companies have had to address issues of racial inequality through initiatives on black empowerment. In many countries small and medium-sized enterprises are the key employers of the poor, where direct developmental contributions could be greatest, but where CSR is currently most weakly embedded. Recognising this diversity provides an important check against importing CSR models from one context to the next without sufficient regard for key differences that determine success.

In such diverse settings it is unsurprising that CSR initiatives take different forms and have differing impacts upon poverty and the marginalisation of...
people from development opportunities. While codes of conduct may be able to improve basic working conditions in some instances, they are currently less able to tackle patterns of discrimination and harassment in the workplace. While compliance with international environmental standards ensures improvement within the production process, it does little to address the human and environmental externalities produced by that process. A holistic view of poverty is required in which CSR initiatives have a contribution to make, but governments and donors have to be realistic about what can be achieved by them in isolation from their own efforts to tackle poverty.

The importance of process

Although many CSR initiatives focus on output—including improved auditing and benchmarking of firms’ performance in relation to specified standards and codes, the articles in this collection emphasise the importance of process in CSR initiatives if they are to benefit poorer and marginalised groups. Gender issues in many ways exemplify some of problems associated with current CSR approaches. At the design stage, the neglect of gender issues often means codes of conduct fail to address the unique needs of women workers, as research on Africa and Central America clearly shows. Engaging the intended beneficiaries is key in this respect through participatory processes of design, enforcement and evaluation. A gendered reading of CSR initiatives, as developed by Ruth Pearson in this issue, however, points to the need to go beyond the fetishisation of women workers to explore the deeper political and structural roots of gender inequality. Kate Macdonald’s article on coffee supply chains demonstrates that even modestly successful CSR programmes often ignore the priorities of marginalised groups, such as freedom of association for workers. From this perspective conventional CSR tools have only limited potential to address the forms of exclusion that keep marginalised groups in a condition of poverty.

Likewise, in instances of corporate irresponsibility legal process issues take centre stage: access to justice, to mechanisms of appeal and compensation all become crucial in enabling poorer groups to contest badly conceived investments in which their interests may have been overlooked. While international law could provide some protection, there is much greater evidence at the international level of regulation for business than regulation of business: prioritising investor rights over investor responsibilities in global accords. Ambitions of improved conduct expressed in global programmes such as the Global Compact are just a starting point. They have to be translated into practice, as Maureen Kilgour’s article makes clear.

Articles by Kilgour, Macdonald and others highlight the fact that development initiatives are inherently political and conflictual as the actors involved have competing priorities and ideas about how to achieve them. This is in contrast to management models, which often assume equality between stakeholders and that conflict amounts to differences of opinion, resolvable through dialogue, rather than fundamental differences of interest, which are much harder to resolve. Technical and tick-box approaches to CSR
that fail to recognise this are unlikely to make a meaningful contribution to development. We encounter once again, therefore, the conflicting logics of CSR as *business tool* and CSR as *development tool*. Here, the former is aimed at appeasing public audiences and shareholders and, therefore, requires particular forms of communication with quantifiable benchmarks of achievement to justify expenditure on CSR activities. The latter, to be effective, needs to engage less visible audiences of poorer and marginalised groups in a manner which prioritises qualitative issues of process.

**The role of the state**

Despite the anti-state bias of many CSR initiatives, with their emphasis on voluntarism and self-regulation, designing anti-poverty strategies and trade and investment policies that will help to contribute to poverty alleviation remains the responsibility of the state. Governments continue to set the terms and conditions for the role of business in their countries’ own development through systems of incentives and disincentives provided through regulation, tax and the like. Legal systems can determine the respective rights and responsibilities of investors and the communities that host them through property rights, planning rules and systems of redress. Work by institutional theorists reminds us that states remain the primary units of political competition and mobilisation, national legal systems continue to standardise the nature of property rights in an economy and national regulations continue to govern industry entry and exit and many other aspects of market activity. Even in the most dysfunctional African states, with weak government authority, the state continues to exert an important influence on development. Therefore, cross-country differences in the scale and nature of poverty and the impact of private anti-poverty measures are strongly linked to the actions of governments.

Yet often state and private initiatives poorly cohere or lack co-ordination. Gulbrandsen and Moe explore BP’s efforts to engage the government as part of its wide-ranging initiatives to contribute to development in Azerbaijan, even in the absence of a state-led development plan. Utting’s paper shows that the value of CSR contributions at firm and community level can be offset by firms withholding key resources from the state in the form of taxation, or by lobbying for macroeconomic policies such as the privatisation of services, which puts them beyond the reach of many poor consumers. Beyond undermining or offsetting the effects of positive actions, state collusion in corporate irresponsibility is also rife, as David Fig’s article on Brazil in this issue and our previous work in Nigeria and India clearly show. Patterns of corruption and rent-seeking behaviour by political elites often override the needs of poorer groups in the rush to access their land and resources or offer their labour to private investors.

Sometimes entrepreneurial firms have important contributions to make in their own right, often guided merely by self-interest. As Glover shows, targeting agricultural innovations to the needs of resource-poor farmers through their involvement in technology development creates more
consumers for new products. Likewise, building local health clinics and providing clean water makes for healthier employees, while constructing roads may be beneficial for community and company alike. Nonetheless, beyond such clear 'win-win' scenarios, businesses, perhaps unsurprisingly, often perform poorly as social development actors. Lack of human resources, the adoption of technical frameworks for understanding complex social problems and lack of integration of firm activities within broader development programmes often undermine their ability to promote lasting development.\textsuperscript{39} The poor performance of many firms as social development actors amid so many competing and ever increasing demands only serves to underline the primary role of the state as the key agent in poverty politics. CSR, after all, was never conceived as a tool to tackle poverty. That current approaches often fail in this objective is not necessarily grounds for believing that future CSR interventions cannot be constructed in such a way that they enhance existing public efforts to combat poverty, looking not only to \textit{do no harm}, but to \textit{do good} and to do it not only at the micro level but to take seriously the macro-level contributions and responsibilities of business.

\textbf{Conclusions}

Although CSR emphasises the social and environmental responsibilities of firms, many of the cases in this special issue underline the importance of accountability in thinking about the potential role of business in development. While activists have emphasised the need for a UN Corporate Accountability Convention that would legally enshrine the expectations and standards which apply to firms wherever they operate, regardless of size or sector, as an instrument aimed at providing minimum basic social and environmental standards, others have drawn attention to a range of informal, often localised, strategies of accountability adopted by poorer groups. Enabling poorer groups to hold investors to account for their social, environmental and developmental obligations helps to ensure that firms deliver on promises of employment, gains for the community and responsible use of natural resources. Often the failure of state support to the poor and the absence of corporate responsiveness has led poorer groups to adopt their own community-based strategies of corporate accountability.\textsuperscript{40} Hearings, people's development plans and community environmental monitoring have all proved to be important in this regard. Such strategies appear to be prevalent in areas of the world beyond the reach of CSR, where companies are less concerned about brand name, less subject to activist scrutiny and state pressure for reform. The fact that people resort to everyday practices of corporate accountability is not an argument for excusing state inaction, but rather an indication of it.

Many of the contributions in this issue suggest that the world of CSR would look very different if the priorities of poorer groups were put first. Both the \textit{content} and the \textit{process} by which CSR initiatives are created would be unrecognisable to advocates of current tools and approaches. It is clearly unrealistic to expect businesses in a globalised capitalist economy to operate
as if poverty alleviation were their main objective. The greatest contribution
CSR initiatives can make is through reinforcing state-led development policy. CSR
strategies need to graft onto, enhance and amplify the impact of existing
pro-poor initiatives, even if they can also make contributions in their
own right.

Disaggregating who the poor are and the different needs they have is
crucial as the articles in this special issue make clear. As producers,
consumers, employees and citizens they will present companies with a range
of often competing and contradictory demands. Effective processes for
reconciling and prioritising these demands are key. Assessing CSR contributions
from the perspective of different dimensions of poverty represents an
important contribution in this regard. Peter Utting’s evaluation of CSR from
the perspective of equality, for example, allows us to discern critically how
and when CSR instruments may affect, positively and negatively, patterns of
(in)equality. Taking the perspective of particular social groups, as Maureen
Kilgour does through her gendered reading of the Global Compact, suggests
another useful entry point. The big picture debates about business and
poverty look too fuzzy from a distance. Only closer up, upon attention to
micro-detail and the nuances of context, do the fault lines of what is possible
and how become clear.

Encouraging firms to take seriously their social and environmental
obligations to society is to be encouraged. The business of business is no
longer just business, if indeed it ever was. Expecting too much of CSR,
particularly regarding its contribution to tackling poverty, however, is
unrealistic. Philanthropy, standards and codes of practice and engagement in
partnerships make potentially important contributions to development. In
and of themselves, however, they are inadequate. They fail to address either
the non-CSR poverty impacts of business practice nor acts of corporate
irresponsibility. It remains the case that CSR initiatives have not yet been
adopted in most parts of the world by the majority of firms, public and
private, multinational or small and medium-sized, in other words by the
majority of employers of the poor. They fail to address difficult questions
about treatment of suppliers and workers’ rights or about community
reinvestment and obligations to invest over the long term or to provide job
security. The range of development issues they address, while important, is
limited. It remains the role of governments, supported by donors and
working with both firms and civil society groups, to enable the implementa-
tion of a CSR agenda which looks at the range of business impacts upon
poverty and the potential contributions of all actors in development towards
helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Notes

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5 There is an important distinction to be drawn here between the poor who are the subject of such business school thinking—those that earn up to $2000 a year—and those who survive on less that $1 or $2 a day and who may continue to be overlooked in such models. For the latter traditional development assistance may continue to be necessary. We are grateful to Rhys Jenkins for making this observation.


12 As Prieto-Carrón et al argue, ‘Accepting uncritically that more CSR can solve complex problems associated with poverty in the global South ignores the possibility that CSR may do more harm than good’. Prieto-Carrón, ‘Critical perspectives on CSR and development’, p 986.


17 While a number of the contributors to this special issue focus on corporations, one needs to remember that the vast majority of the world’s firms are smaller—typically family-owned—businesses, which sometimes play important roles within their communities.


23 Newell, ‘Citizenship, accountability and community’.
38 Peter Newell, ‘Citizenship, accountability and community’; and Frynas, ‘The false developmental promise of CSR’.
39 See empirical research in Frynas, ‘The false developmental promise of CSR’.
41 Jenkins, ‘Globalization, corporate social responsibility and poverty’.