



# C&E Corporate-NGO Partnerships Barometer 2020

## Resilience amidst the turbulence



*Partnerships responses to Covid-19 pandemic  
boost – rather than diminish – cross-sector  
partnering*

*Strong and strategic corporate and non-profit  
responses to the antiracism movement –  
supported by cross-sector partnering*

*Lack of a holistic approach to addressing ESG  
issues leaves many non-profits at serious risk*

**Special Topics Edition**

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## Introduction

Welcome to this 2020 edition of the C&E Corporate-NGO Partnerships Barometer – the 11th in our unique annual series of practitioner-led studies.

This 2020 Barometer edition draws on the experience of 110 leading companies and NGOs who completed our confidential annual survey during July. The survey was supplemented by deep-dive roundtable discussions with corporate and NGO practitioners to provide qualitative insights.

The Barometer series offers growing insight into the ways in which the corporate-NGO partnering landscape is evolving. Each year’s findings build on previous years’ data to deepen understanding of drivers, changing practices and likely future developments in cross-sector partnering and its growing impact on society.



To say this year’s Barometer findings have been heavily influenced by the global pandemic would, of course, be to flirt with understatement. What this edition does try to do is delve deeper into different aspects of the Covid-19 crisis and to assess the threats and opportunities both today and into our collective unknown future – and to look specifically at the potential level of engagement in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues as a result of the pandemic. By the time of the 12th Barometer, we may be looking back a year from the perspective of a nightmare from which the world has emerged, a continued ‘new reality’ - or some hybrid of the two. But what is certain – and what is readily apparent from this year’s results – is that the crisis has sharply changed the immediate priorities for cross-sector partnering.

This year’s Barometer also takes a close look at the #BlackLivesMatter movement and its implications for organisational responses across the spectrum of equality issues and, specifically, its potential impact on partnerships – with some fascinating insights.

Both these huge issues are also pertinent to the specific look this year’s Barometer takes at the holistic approach taken by organisations on all sides of the partnering agenda. Recent - and deserved - adverse publicity has reminded organisations that they don’t operate in silos, whatever their main strategic focus may be. NGOs focussing on humanitarian causes, for example, are not immune to criticism on their performance on environmental issues, however laudable their main mission. Similarly, several corporates involved in worthy and even ground-breaking partnerships in the ESG arena have, nevertheless, come under fire from groups concerned specifically with equality, environmental and/or supply chain issues, for example. The need for organisations to think holistically, therefore, in ESG terms has perhaps never been greater and the 2020 Barometer seeks to reflect this growing area of focus - and to report back on the state of play between companies and non-profits.

And finally, we are hugely grateful to all our respondents and commentators for sharing their unique and valuable perspectives and experiences. We hope this 2020 edition of the C&E Corporate-NGO

Partnerships Barometer helps to inform and enhance their and your understanding, investment decisions and practice of corporate-NGO partnering.

As usual, we welcome your comments and suggestions via [www.candeadvisory.com/barometer](http://www.candeadvisory.com/barometer) or [admin@candeadvisory.com](mailto:admin@candeadvisory.com)

**Manny Amadi, MVO**

CEO, C&E Advisory

## Headline findings

### Why partner?

*For corporates, reputation and credibility remain paramount (93%), whilst for NGOs, access to funding (96%) remains the key driver. But this year, some of the complementary aims and longer-term focus are down for NGOs - whilst corporates are less concerned about securing efficiency and effectiveness through partnerships.*

Both corporates and NGOs report notably lower interest regarding 'access to new markets' as a reason for cross-sector partnering. However, they diverge on 'effectiveness' (creating more appropriate products and services) which sees a striking reversal (down 23% on last year) for companies, and an upswing (up 10%) as a reason for partnering on the NGO side.

### Partnering practice and effectiveness

*Corporates again lead NGOs in depth and reach of partnerships*

The gradual shift in emphasis towards the creation of deeper, problem-solving partnerships continues, with 63% of corporates stating that their organisations are increasingly engaged in strategic partnerships designed to address core, mission-relevant or purpose-led issues in ways that create value for society, for themselves and for their NGO partners. This contrasts with NGOs where only a quarter (26%) report the same to be true. These findings are logically complemented by the fact that a larger percentage of NGOs than corporates (46% vs. 30%) believe that such a position is an aspirational one – and that their organisation is moving towards achieving it.

*Corporates and NGOs remain highly confident that partnerships help to improve business understanding*

Encouragingly, practitioners remain more or less unanimous (98% of corporates and 85% of NGOs) in their belief that their partnerships have helped corporate partners to enhance their understanding of the social / environmental issues that the partnerships have been designed to address.

*Strong majority of corporates and NGOs report that partnerships are helping to change business practices for the better*

Similarly, around two-thirds of corporate and NGO respondents (67% and 63% respectively) indicate that business practices have improved because of their engagement in partnerships. Again, this is highly encouraging, providing continued validation that businesses are taking greater action to improve their performance on social and environmental issues.

### Non-profits: holistic environmental, social and governance (ESG) frameworks and plans

*The NGO approach to addressing ESG issues appear reactive and fragmented, rather than holistic*

Whilst many non-profits have clear, core social and environmental missions to which they dedicate resources and on which they often demonstrate outstanding results, it is often not evident how effectively such organisations perform on other ESG issues. For example, activities designed to achieve

desirable social outcomes may have harmful environmental effects – and vice versa, yet the benefits of taking a holistic approach to the planning and delivery of ESG practices have been well demonstrated.

We sought in this 2020 Barometer to establish whether non-profits have a holistic approach to their ESG practices – and the extent to which their corporate partners perceive this to be the case.

The Barometer found that over a third (37%) of NGOs and around a quarter (26%) of corporates state that their non-profit organisations or partners do *not* have a holistic ESG plan or framework in place. Just over a third of corporates and NGOs (35% and 37% respectively) believe their charities (or non-profit partners) have holistic ESG plans in place, whilst 39% of corporates and 27% of NGO respondents are uncertain of their non-profit partners', or charities' status on this issue.

After several leading development organisations and charities have faced recent criticism for poor safeguarding, environmental, supply chain, and other practices, it is notable that such high proportions (around two-thirds) of non-profits appear not to take a holistic approach to tackling ESG issues – or poorly communicate their practices in this regard. We argue that this concerning finding represents a risk to non-profits. As they continue to plan for a post Covid-19 future, re-imagine their theories of change, and build new business models, we believe that that it is imperative for non-profits to think holistically about the importance of the ESG agenda for their future evolution.

### **The stars – the most admired corporate-NGO partnerships and partners**

*Ambition, scale, impact, and relevance secure acclaim from partnership practitioners*

This year, for the second year running in an unprompted voting process, the Boots UK–Macmillan Cancer Support partnership has been voted the Most Admired Corporate-NGO Partnership by partnering professionals. But it is being strongly challenged for leadership by the Tesco-WWF collaboration which has moved up significantly year on year.

And in third place, is the Tesco Health Charity Partnership, with Cancer Research UK, the British Heart Foundation, Diabetes UK (just pipping 2018 winner and last year's runner-up GSK-Save the Children).

## **Special Topics**

### **The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic**

*Cross-sector partnering practitioners double down on tackling ESG issues following the global pandemic*

The 2020 Barometer sought to establish the impact of Covid-19 on corporate and non-profit approaches to ESG issues. Any fears that the pandemic and the resource-constrained times it has ushered in might lead to a down-grading of corporate or non-profit attention on ESG issues has not been borne out by the findings. Instead, the data reveals the opposite effect: the impact of the pandemic has been to make most companies and non-profits more actively engaged in addressing ESG issues. The effect is most pronounced on the corporate side, where an overwhelming 80% of businesses are more, or much more actively engaged in addressing ESG issues because of Covid-19. No corporate respondents reported lower levels of engagement on ESG issues.

Responses on the non-profit side were also positive, if less decisive; 60% of NGOs report that their organisations are more, or much more actively engaged in addressing ESG issues because of Covid-19, with 38% indicating a neutral effect, and 2% less actively engaged.

*Social programming issues dominate corporate and NGO responses to Covid-19*

Unprompted responses indicate that for both companies and non-profits, issues related to social programming at the community level (from food and mental health provision, to re-skilling and tackling digital exclusion) have come very much to the fore in their enhanced response to ESG issues. There is, however, a risk that negative effects arise as non-profits, in particular, dial down on environmental issues in favour of seemingly more pressing social issues.

*Enhanced role for cross-sector partnering in corporate-NGO responses to Covid-19*

Cross-sector partnering is playing a vitally important role in organisations' responses to the pandemic. Nearly three-quarters of corporates and non-profits (70% and 72% respectively) report that they have increased or will increase their emphasis on partnering due to Covid-19.

*And the pandemic is changing how corporates and non-profits partner*

And in looking at the nature of partnerships and whether Covid-19 has changed *how* organisations engage in those partnerships, 81% of all NGOs assert that the pandemic has either changed or changed significantly, how their organisation partners with corporates (with the rest reporting no change).

The equivalent figure on the corporates' side is significantly lower, with nearly half (48%) reporting that the pandemic has changed, or significantly changed how they partner with non-profits. Just over half (52%) reported no changes in this regard.

Re-purposing existing partnerships; mobilising product, process and people assets; collective impact; and digital, tech, and pace emerge as important ways in which cross-sector partnerships are evolving in response to Covid-19.

**The impact of the antiracism movement**

Given the enormity of the world's response to the death of George Floyd during his forceful arrest by Minneapolis Police in May of this year, and public and media interest in the antiracism and the #BlackLivesMatter movement that followed, the 2020 Barometer included a section dedicated to examining corporate and non-profit responses to the issues raised, and the implications for cross-sector partnering.

*Many companies and non-profits report that their organisations are making a strong and strategic response*

Responses from both companies and non-profits indicate that the vast majority of organisations are taking, or are set to take, clear steps in their response to the antiracism movement. Around three quarters of corporate respondents (74%) and over four-fifths of non-profits (85%) expect their organisation to make a fairly strong, or strong strategic response to the issues raised by the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Most of the rest of the responding corporates and NGOs expect that

their organisation will make some response, with only 4% of organisations in each sector expecting no response from their organisations.

*Why?*

There are often multiple reasons for organisations committing to change in addressing the issues raised by the antiracism movement, but these reasons cluster around the moral case for social justice, pressure from employees, as well as the opportunity to better engage existing or access new service users and customers.

*A significant majority of companies and NGOs expect the issues raised by the #BlackLivesMatter movement to feature in their partnerships*

Overall, a significant majority of companies (66%) and NGOs (60%) expect the issues raised by the #BlackLivesMatter movement to feature in their partnerships – including on policy, advocacy, and programmatic areas.

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### **Medium-term prospects for corporate-NGO partnering**

*Cross-sector partnerships likely to become even more important over the next three years*

The overwhelming majority of practitioners from both sides of the partnering arena expect that partnerships between companies and NGOs will become even more important over the coming three years.

More NGOs (98%) anticipate this growing rise in the importance of cross-sector partnering than their corporate counterparts, but nearly nine out of ten (87%) corporates expect that partnerships between the sectors will play a more or much more important role in the coming three years.

Approximately nine out of ten corporates and NGOs cite the need to leverage each others' assets to maximise the mutual benefit, and pressure on companies to demonstrate societal consideration within business practices as the likely key drivers for the continuing importance of cross-sector partnerships.

*Increases in investment on the way*

Two-thirds (65%) of corporates and around three-quarters (76%) of NGOs expect their organisation to increase or significantly increase their investment (commitment, time, resources, etc.) in cross-sector partnering over the next three years. A striking sentiment, given the headwinds presented by Covid-19 and other economic and political uncertainties.



## Part 1: Current state

### 1. Why companies and NGOs partner

*For corporates, reputation and credibility remain paramount, whilst for NGOs, access to funding remains the key driver. But this year, some of the complementary aims and longer-term focus are down for NGOs - whilst corporates are less concerned about securing efficiency and effectiveness through partnerships.*

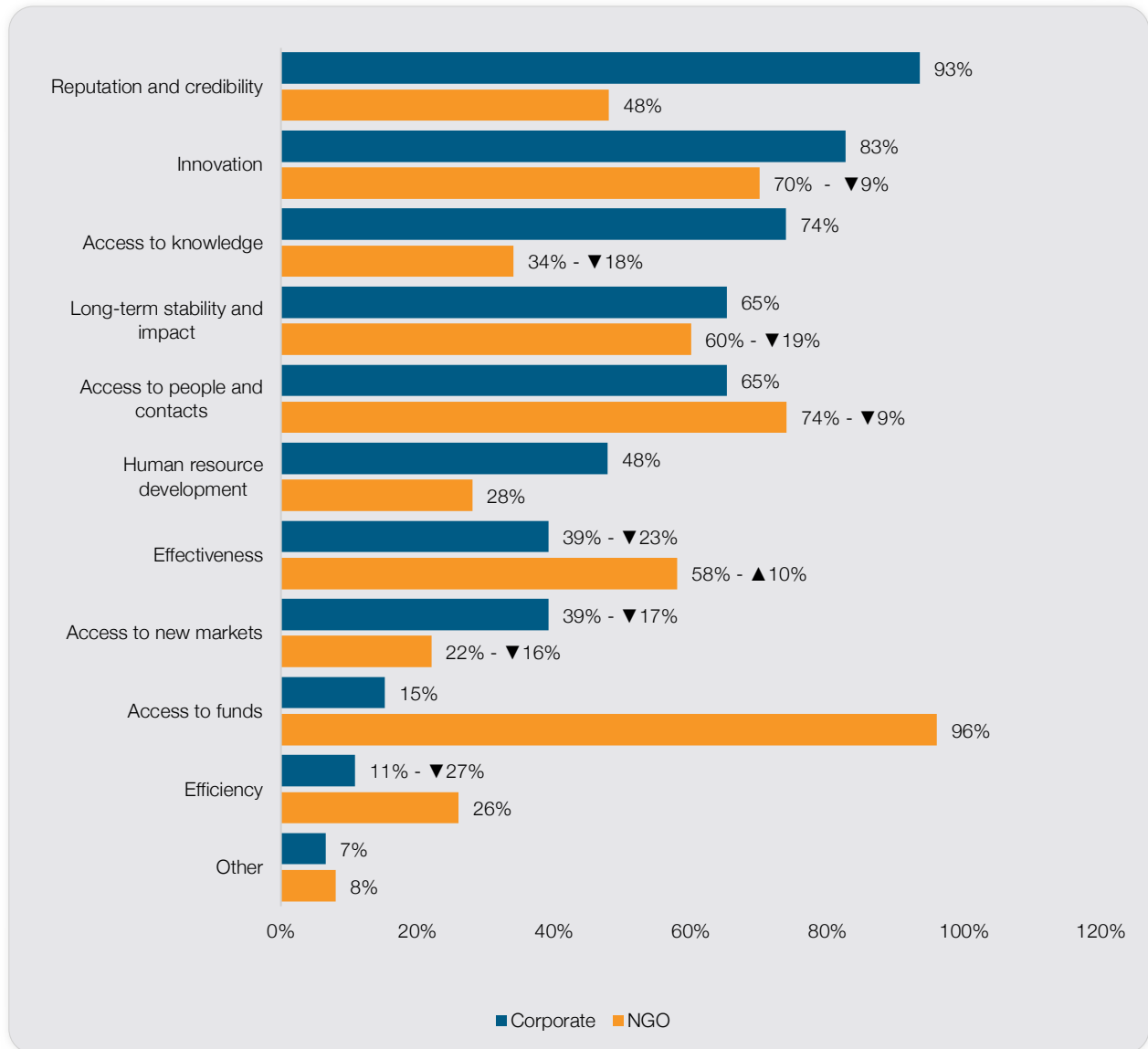
Since its inception, the Barometer has consistently informed us that NGOs need funding from their corporate partners whilst corporates desire enhanced reputation and credibility courtesy of their non-profit partners. This remains the case in 2020. But a marked feature of progression across the last decade of Barometer findings has been the consistent shift towards, as well as deeper understanding and leveraging of, the multi-faceted benefits that partnerships can generate.

This year, however, looks anomalously different – possibly driven by the economic existential threats generated by the global pandemic. This is impossible to state categorically, but what is apparent from the data is that NGOs are less concerned about accessing their partners' knowledge, contacts, and innovation – and also report being less interested in securing long term stability and impact through partnerships than has been the case in recent years. This seems curious and perhaps counter-intuitive, given the need to find new ways of solving problems, particularly in the context of a disruptive health emergency. However, in roundtable discussions, non-profit participants emphasised the urgent need they faced in securing un-earmarked funding which could then be deployed speedily and flexibly to address the most pressing needs.

Both corporates and NGOs report notably lower interest regarding access to new markets as a reason for cross-sector partnering. However, they diverge on 'effectiveness' (creating more appropriate products and services) which sees a striking reversal (down 23% on last year) for companies, and an upswing (up 10%) as a reason for partnering on the NGO side. The significant downgrading of 'efficiency' by companies as a reason for partnering (down 27% year on year) is also curious, particularly in resource-constrained times.

Overall, as illustrated by figure 1 below, the 2020 Barometer again reflects the main desires of partners to raise funds (NGOs) and to enhance reputation (corporates) but in several other areas, the results show a marked skew, not only from 2019, but from the Barometer's 'direction of travel' for the preceding decade.

**Figure 1: Why companies and NGOs engage in partnerships with each other (broken down by sector):**



*Why does your organisation engage in corporate-NGO partnerships?*

## 2. Partnering practice and effectiveness

### The depth and reach of partnerships

*Corporates again lead NGOs in depth and reach of partnerships*

Since the inception of the Barometer over a decade ago, there has been a gradual shift in emphasis towards the creation of deeper, problem-solving partnerships, both in terms of the aims of partnerships and in their actual delivery. This is borne out by a wealth of statistical data, including those partnerships which have been most admired by practitioners over the past decade.

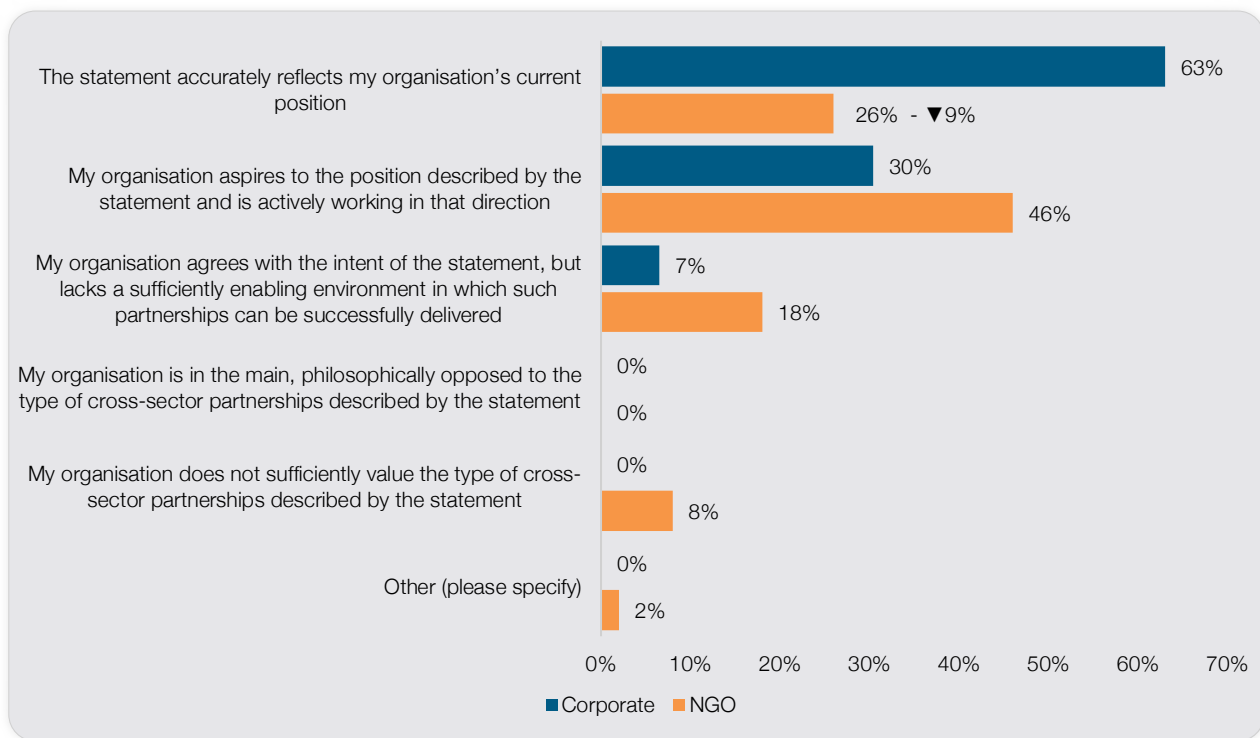
Overall, this year’s findings are similar (figure 2), with nearly two-thirds of corporates (63%) stating that their organisations are increasingly engaged in deeper, problem-solving partnerships designed to

address core, mission-relevant or purpose-led issues in ways that create value for society, for themselves and for their NGO partners. This contrasts with NGOs where only a quarter (26%) report the same to be true of their partnerships. These findings are logically complemented by the fact that a larger percentage of NGOs than corporates (46% vs. 30%) believe that such a position is an aspirational one – and that their organisation is moving towards achieving it.

Similarly, 18% of NGOs and just 7% of corporates believe their organisations agree with this aim but don't have the organisational capacity to deliver on it, whilst 8% of NGOs believe their organisations don't truly value such mission-led, problem-solving partnerships.

However, the overall trend and big picture regarding the move towards more strategic partnering remains positive.

**Figure 2: The extent of deeper, problem-solving partnerships addressing core, mission-relevant or purpose-led issues in ways that create value for society:**



*“We are increasingly engaged in deeper, problem-solving partnerships designed to address core, mission-relevant or purpose-led issues in ways that create value for society, for ourselves and for our (corporate or NGO) partners.” In light of the preceding statement, which of the following choices most accurately reflects your organisation’s current position.*

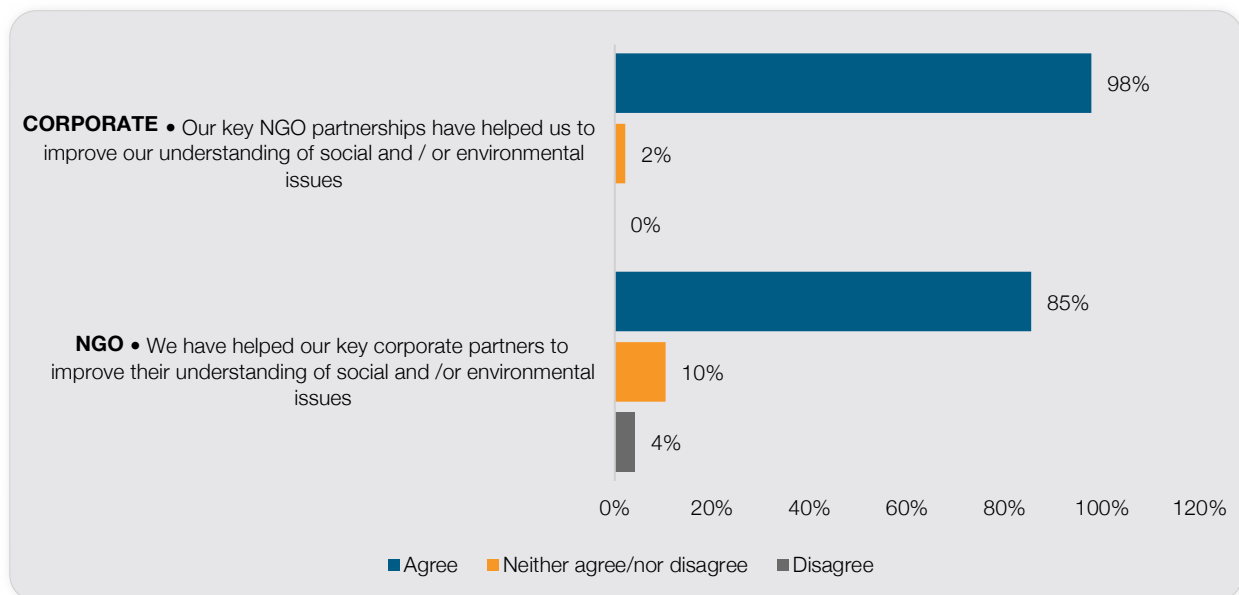
**Enhancing business understanding of social and environmental issues – and changing business practices for the better**

*Corporates and NGOs remain highly confident that partnerships help to improve business understanding*

This year’s Barometer again assessed the extent to which partnerships help to enhance business understanding of social and environmental issues – as well as the extent to which business practices may have changed for the better as a result of that enhanced understanding.

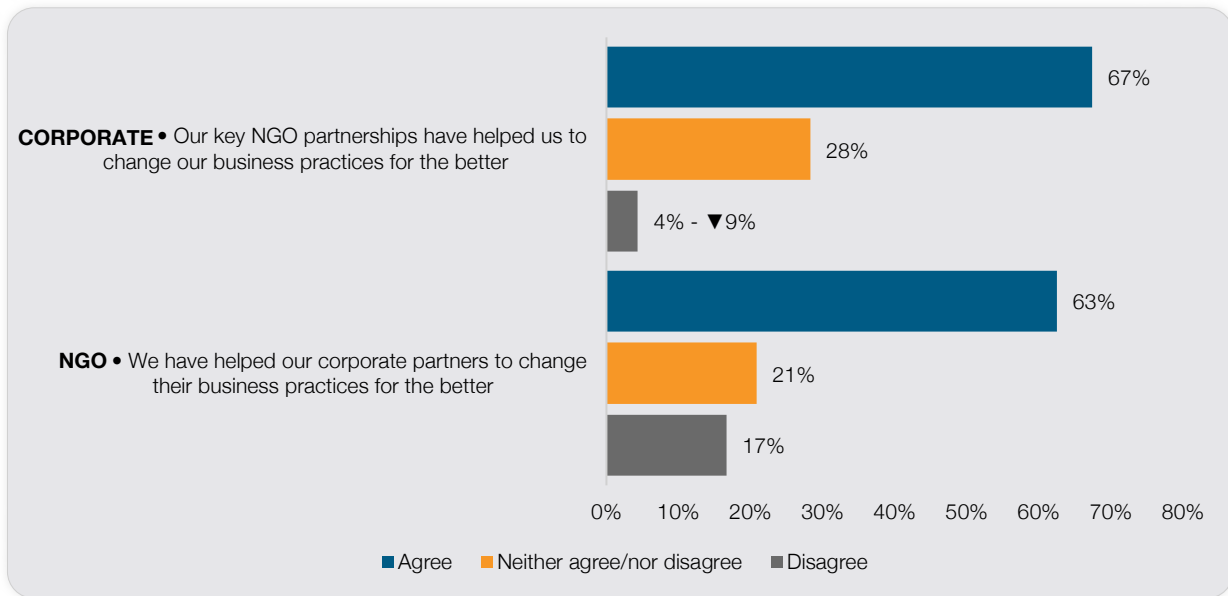
Encouragingly (figure 3), practitioners remain more or less unanimous (98% of corporates and 85% of NGOs) in their belief that their partnerships have helped corporate partners to develop their understanding of the societal / environmental issues their partnerships have been designed to address.

**Figure 3: The extent to which partners have helped each other understand the issues they’re facing:**



Similarly (figure 4), around two-thirds of corporate and NGO respondents (67% and 63% respectively) indicate that business practices have improved because of their engagement in partnerships. Again, this is highly encouraging, and provides continued validation of the view that businesses are taking greater positive action to improve their performance on social and environmental issues. However, whilst fewer corporates (just 4%) disagree with this sentiment than in previous years, NGOs are slightly less convinced in this regard than their corporate counterparts – with 17% of NGO respondents disagreeing that partnerships have helped change their partners’ business practices for the better. This gap in findings has been a constant theme of the Barometer, likely reflecting an ongoing desire from NGOs that their corporate partners should improve their societal / environmental performance further and faster.

**Figure 4: Extent to which partnerships help change business practices for the better:**



**3. The stars – the most admired corporate-NGO partnerships and partners**

*“Visible, tangible and relevant” ...for the second year running, the Boots UK – Macmillan Cancer Support partnership is the most admired by professionals*

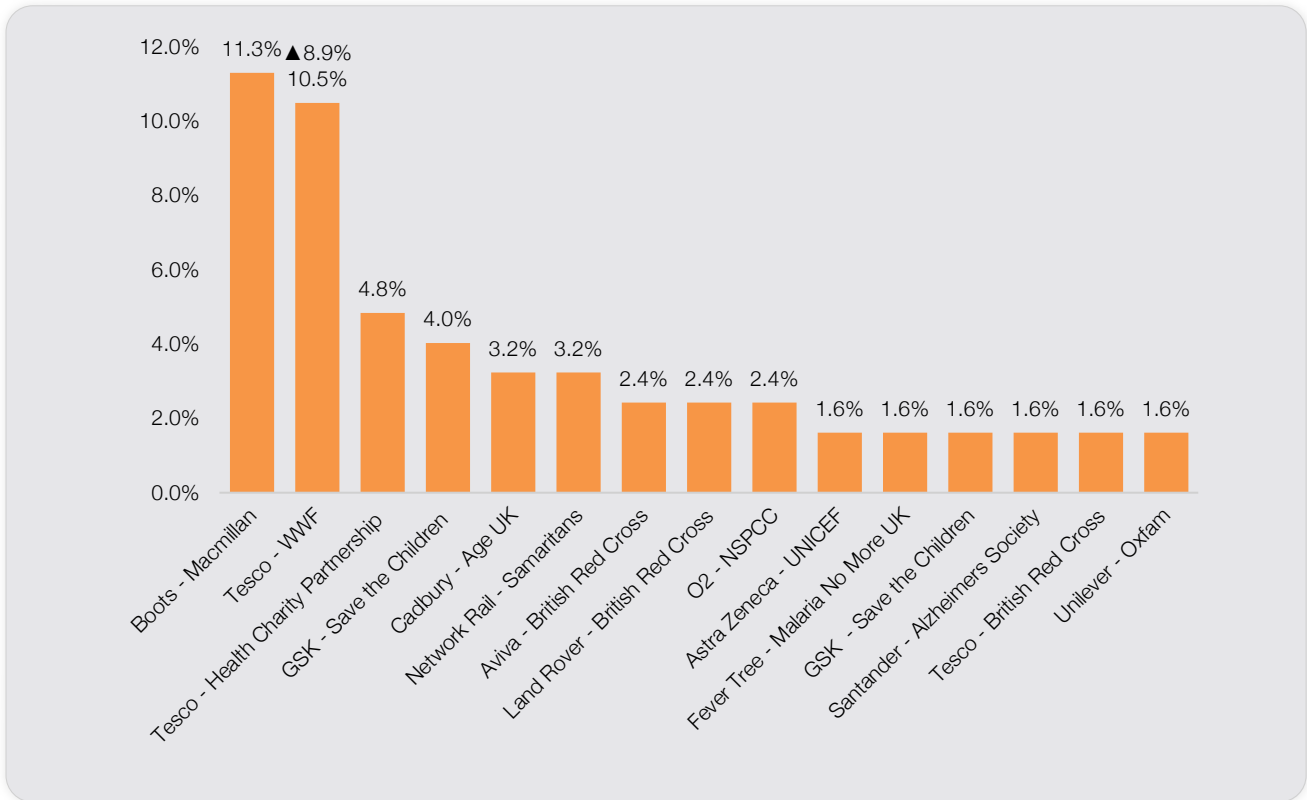
Each year, the Barometer takes a look at which partnerships are deemed to be the most exemplary. In an entirely unprompted, confidential exercise, Barometer survey respondents drawn from UK and internationally leading companies and NGOs are asked which other corporate-NGO partnerships they particularly admire and why that is. We also derive the most admired partnering companies and NGOs from the same data (figures 5, 6, and 7).

This year, for the second year running, the Boots UK–Macmillan Cancer Support partnership has been voted the Most Admired Corporate-NGO Partnership. But it is being strongly challenged for leadership by the Tesco-WWF alliance which has moved up significantly year on year.

And in third place, just pipping 2018 winner and last year’s runner-up GSK-Save the Children, is the Tesco Health Charity Partnership, with Cancer Research UK, the British Heart Foundation, Diabetes UK -regaining its top three position first secured in the 2018 Barometer.

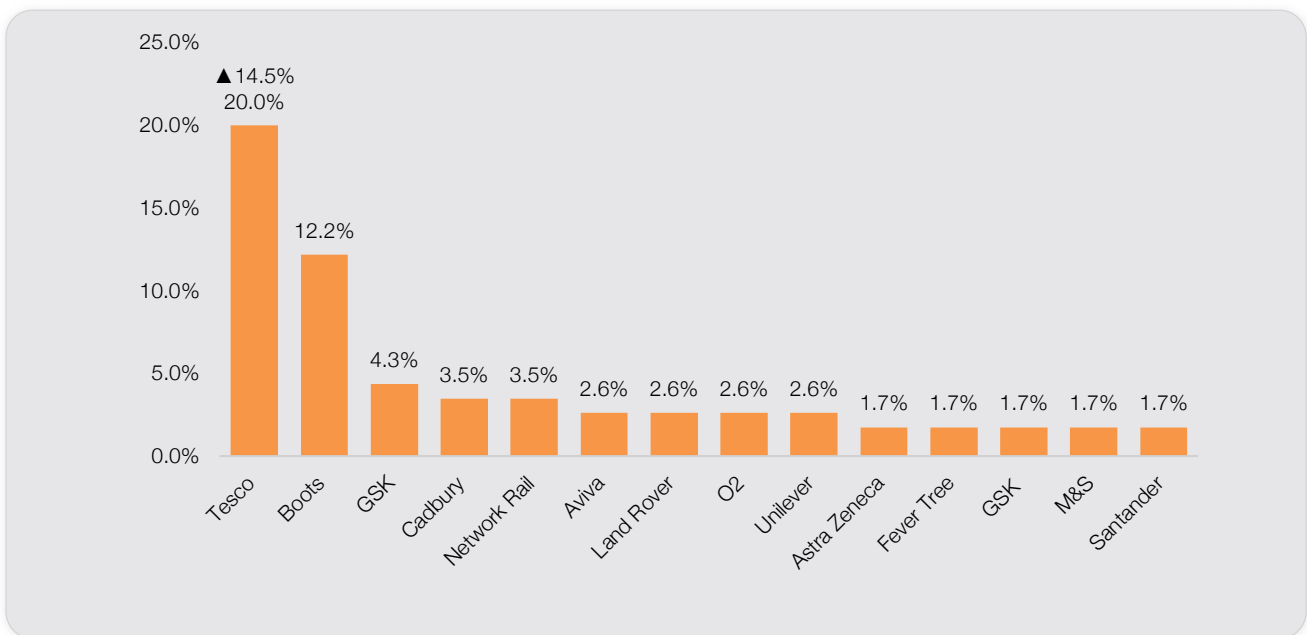
Further explanation of the nature and scale of these popular partnerships are included below, along with comments from respondents which typify exactly why these three are the sector’s most admired partnerships. All of these partnerships – and highly-rated partnering organisations – are to be congratulated, not only for the value they are securing for stakeholders in different parts of the world, but also for the inspiration they provide to practitioners in the cross-sector partnerships arena.

**Figure 5: The most admired corporate-NGO partnerships**

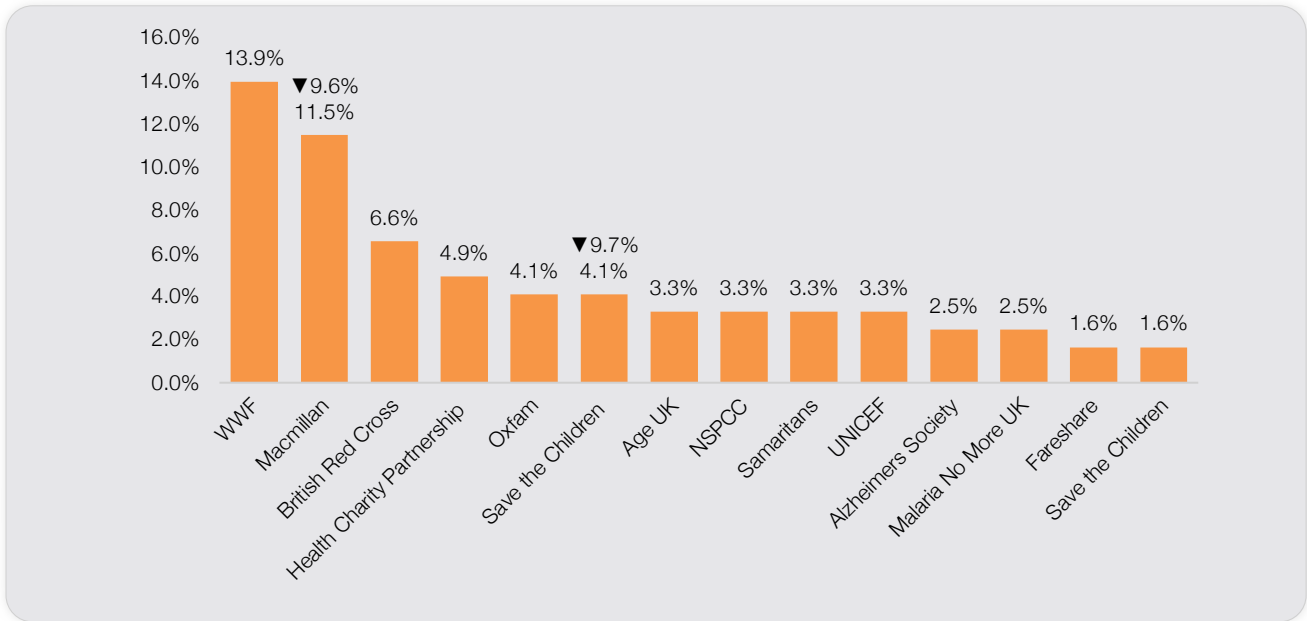


*Which other corporate-NGO partnerships do you admire and why? (Respondents could list up to three starting with their most admired partnership).*

**Figure 6: Most Admired Partners, Corporates**



**Figure 7: Most Admired Partners, NGOs**



**The Boots UK - Macmillan Cancer Support partnership**

Being told ‘you have cancer’ can affect so much more than just your health – it can affect the way you think and feel about yourself.

Since 2009, the partnership between Boots UK and Macmillan Cancer Support has worked to make sure that people living with cancer have access to the best cancer information and support from within their local community. The partnership aims to give everyone, everywhere, the best cancer information and support they need in a place that’s every day, reliable and familiar and trusted, so that people with cancer are able to keep living life as fully as they can.

Over 2,000\* Boots Macmillan Information Pharmacists, who have volunteered to receive bespoke training, are available to offer advice on living with cancer from a trusted high street location. Additionally, there are over 1000\* No7 Beauty Advisors available who have undergone specific training developed by Boots and Macmillan to become Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors, offering free face-to-face support with managing the visible side effects of cancer treatment. Both Boots Macmillan Information Pharmacists and No7 Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisors are now available virtually, to support people living with cancer during this time, from the comfort of their own home.

A Boots UK survey of 100% of stores indicated that in one year\*\*, over 63,000 conversations with a Boots Macmillan Information Pharmacist and over 21,000 consultations with a Boots Macmillan Beauty Advisor were had to support people affected by cancer. Since the partnership started, Boots UK colleagues and customers have also raised over £19 million to support Macmillan’s life-changing services.

To find out more visit: [www.boots.com/macmillan](http://www.boots.com/macmillan)

\*2,027 store-based BMIPs and 1,067 BMBAs as at 31 August 2020.

\*\*September 2019 – August 2020, quantitative data based on averages.

Typical of the kind of comments made by practitioners about the Boots Macmillan partnership were:

- *“High profile, clear synergies”*
- *“Strategic fit and big impact of cancer information on the high street”*
- *“Purpose driven at core”*
- *“Pharmacists and beauty advisors work directly with beneficiaries”*
- *“Taking healthcare onto the high street and helping to de-medicalise living with cancer”*

### The Tesco - WWF Partnership

Tesco and WWF launched their ground-breaking partnership in 2018 with the aim of halving the environmental impact of the average UK shopping basket. To achieve this the partnership needed a better understanding of the impact some of the UK’s most purchased foods are having on the planet. To help, the partnership launched the Sustainable Basket Metric to track key sustainability criteria across the entire food value chain, from production to consumption.

The Metric measures environmental impacts of food across seven different categories: climate change; deforestation; sustainable diets; sustainable agriculture; marine sustainability; food waste; and packaging waste. So far, Tesco has achieved 11% of its target to halve the environmental impact of the average shopping basket.

Tesco and WWF are working together on a number of different initiatives to make the food Tesco offers more sustainable, including working to ensure all wild fish is sourced from sustainable sources, and reducing emissions in existing supply chains.

Some of the comments made by practitioners about the Tesco-WWF partnership were:

- *“This is a truly strategic programme looking to reach its mission through systemic change. Income in only a small element of this truly mission-led partnership. It's utterly inspiring”*
- *“Focus on delivering policy outcomes that impact the core operations of the business”*
- *“Shows that you don't need all the answers at the outset to make a bold commitment and step out on the journey together”*
- *“Aligned around one clear ambition and vision despite being very different in their values and principles. The partnership leans into Tesco's business potential to change consumer behaviour around food waste and sustainability, whilst leveraging WWF's expertise and drive” to deliver greater impact in this area*
- *“A clear set of priorities and far reaching scope (global)”*
- *“Strong strategic link up on the important topic of environmental sustainability - combining WWF's inspiring brand and science with Tesco's business scale and know-how to access and drive consumer change”*

To find out more visit: <https://www.tescopl.com/sustainability/partnerships/wwf/>



## The Tesco - Health Charity Partnership (Cancer Research UK, the British Heart Foundation, Diabetes UK)

The Tesco Health Charity Partnership was launched in 2018 to inspire, empower and support Tesco colleagues, customers and their families to make sustainable lifestyle changes and adopt healthy habits. Through this work, the partnership aims to bring about measurable changes to the behaviours that can lower the risk of cancer, heart and circulatory diseases and type 2 diabetes.

Combined, these diseases account for more than half of all deaths in the UK, yet 4 in 10 cases of cancer, 3 in 5 cases of type 2 diabetes, and 3 in 4 cases of heart and circulatory diseases can be prevented. Making healthier food choices and lifestyle changes now can make a big difference to the risk of these conditions.

By combining the charity partners' unique knowledge and expertise about these conditions, with Tesco's longstanding heritage of supporting colleague and customer health, the partnership aims to encourage and support sustainable behaviour change, through a series of targeted activities and campaigns aimed at reducing the risk of cancer, heart and circulatory diseases and Type 2 diabetes.

Some of the comments made by practitioners about the Tesco - Health Charity Partnership were:

- *"Working hard to deliver a fantastic colleague workplace health programme and to inspire customers to live healthier lives through partnership collaboration"*
- *"Sector leading aspiration and the leading example of four key partners combining to tackle deep routed health inequalities"*
- *"Unique partnership addressing the biggest health issues of our time"*

To find out more visit: <https://www.tescopl.com/sustainability/partnerships/health-charity-partnership/>

## 4. Non-profits - holistic Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) frameworks and plans

*The NGO approach to addressing ESG issues appears reactive and fragmented, rather than holistic*

It has been observed (by subscribers to the Barometer, and in roundtable discussions related to the Barometer and cross-sector partnering) that whilst many non-profits have clear, core social and environmental missions to which they dedicate resources and on which they often demonstrate outstanding results, it is often not evident how effectively such organisations perform on other ESG issues. For example, activities designed to achieve desirable social outcomes may have harmful environmental effects – and vice versa. The assumption is that many non-profits operate in narrow social or environmental 'swim lanes' when these issues increasingly flow in a common pool.

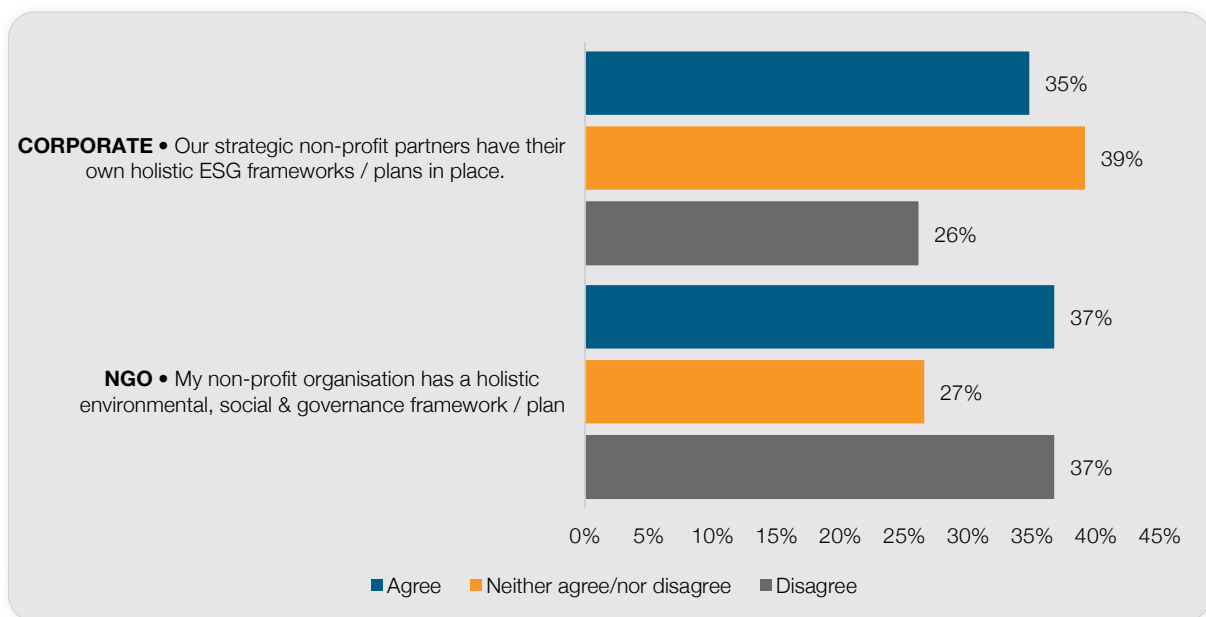
From identifying and mitigating risks, and leveraging opportunities, to helping organisations to fully live their stated values, the benefits of taking a holistic approach to the planning and delivery of ESG practices have been well demonstrated. Arguably, this theme has been accelerated by the need for organisational responses to both the Covid-19 crisis and the antiracism campaigns triggered by the death of George Floyd.

In view of this, and efforts by non-profits to build back better, we sought in this 2020 Barometer to establish whether or not non-profits have a holistic approach to their ESG practices – and the extent to which their corporate partners perceive this to be the case.

The findings (figure 8) are instructive. Just over a third of corporates and NGOs (35% and 37% respectively) assess that the latter have holistic ESG plans and frameworks in place to guide organisational practice. Thirty-nine per cent of corporates and over a quarter of NGO respondents (27%) neither agree nor disagree with the statement that their partner NGO / their non-profit organisation has a holistic ESG framework and plan. That large numbers of NGO respondents are unclear about whether or not their organisation has a holistic ESG plan or framework would indicate that, even if they exist, such plans / frameworks are either not prominent nor prioritised within their organisations, or that they are insufficiently communicated - both internally, and to their corporate partners and other stakeholders.

And most strikingly, over a third of NGOs (37%) and around a quarter of corporates (26%) state that their non-profit organisations (or partner organisations) do not have a holistic ESG pan or framework.

**Figure 8: The extent to which non-profits have holistic ESG frameworks in place**



These overall findings were borne out by the illustrative comments received from *NGO practitioners* when they were asked to sum up, in a single sentence, their organisations’ approach to ESG planning and implementation. These included:

- “...Our approach to ESG is evolving as our understanding matures, but we're committed”
- “...Developing at pace”
- “...Increasingly strategic”
- “...Well-intentioned but bitty”
- “...Limited but under review”

- *“...Not currently in place”*

Urgent responses from institutional (non-profit organisations, companies, government) and non-institutional actors (individuals, households, and communities) to the Covid-19 pandemic have reinforced the fact that no one actor has a monopoly on doing good. And that service users, consumers, employees, and society have higher expectations of service providers - whichever sector they hail from. These expectations increasingly extend to the ethical, social, and environmental credentials and performance of non-profits.

In a world in which *“trust us because ours is a good cause”* is unlikely to meet stakeholder expectation, being perceived as a deserved paragon of virtue in one regard may not be enough to defend against criticism in an unrelated area. There is therefore an imperative for non-profits to think holistically about the importance of the ESG agenda for their future evolution as they continue to plan for a post Covid-19 future, re-imagine their theories of change and build new business models.

It will be interesting to see whether the 2021 Barometer will show any shifts on this topic.

## Part 2: Special Topics

### 5. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

*Cross-sector partnering practitioners double down on tackling ESG issues following the global pandemic*

Since the early months of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has threatened to overwhelm governments, businesses, and civil society organisations across the world, with ongoing fears for what might lie ahead for more fragile parts of the global ecosystem.

In the eye of the unprecedented storm most businesses, rightly, focused on securing their supply chains, taking innovative measures to care for staff and engage customers and, where possible, reached out to support their communities. The impact of the coronavirus continues to differ across sectors, with some businesses remaining under existential threat and scrambling to stay alive, whilst others experience massive spikes in demand for goods and services, whilst having to address supply and staff welfare issues.

Similarly, international agencies, NGOs and civil society organisations are facing enormous and varied challenges. Organisations involved in providing frontline crisis assistance continue to experience enormous increases in demand for services – recruiting volunteers / temporary workers, for example, whilst for others, “business has all but dried up”. As stakeholder emphasis shifted to the immediacy of prevailing public health concerns, some NGOs are struggling to stay relevant in this time of crisis with, for example, environmental and sports-focused concerns seemingly being placed on the “back burner” for the time-being.

Paul Polman, latterly CEO of Unilever, has offered that “*coronavirus is an acid test for stakeholder capitalism*”. Several months into the pandemic, as companies rallied around the cry of “build back better” in the preparation for a post-pandemic world, this moment of truth was similarly forcing non-profits to consider the impacts of Covid-19 on their programming. Many are actively reviewing their theories of change, seeking to identify where to add the greatest value to beneficiaries, and possibly, moving onto greater specialisation in resource-constrained times.

Against this background, the 2020 Barometer sought to establish the *impact* of Covid-19 on corporate and non-profit approaches to ESG issues; the *ESG issues* that are being prioritised; the *role that cross-sector partnering is playing* in these organisations’ response to the pandemic; and whether Covid-19 has changed *how companies and non-profits engage* in partnership with each other. The responses are illuminating – and again speak to the drivers, fundamental importance, and role of the ESG and cross-sector partnering agendas.

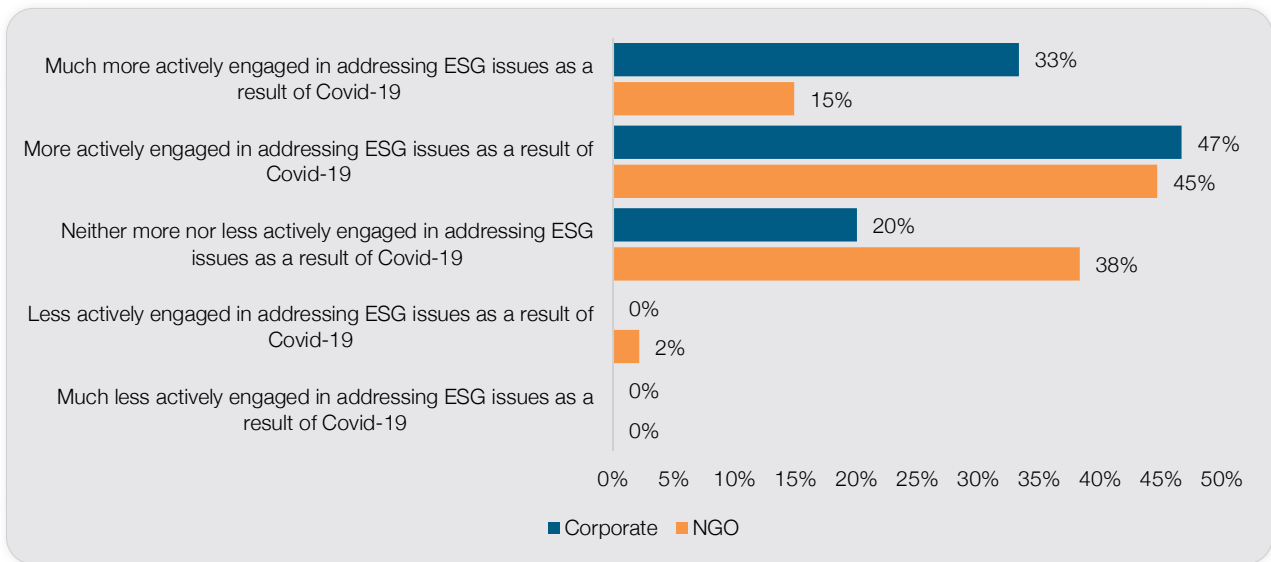
Any fears that the pandemic and the resource-constrained times it has ushered in might lead to a down-grading of corporate or non-profit attention on ESG issues has not been borne out by the Barometer findings. Instead, the data reveal the opposite effect: the impact of the pandemic has been to make most companies and non-profits more actively engaged in addressing ESG issues (figure 8).

The effect is most pronounced on the corporate side, where an overwhelming 80% of businesses are more, or much more actively engaged in addressing ESG issues because of Covid-19. The impact is neutral for the other 20% of companies who are neither more nor less actively engaged in addressing ESG issues because of Covid-19. Not a single corporate respondent reported lower levels of engagement on ESG issues due to the pandemic. Amidst the enormous disruption and pain caused by the pandemic, clearly, this finding is encouraging for society.

Responses on the non-profit side were also positive, if less decisive. Among the NGO respondents, 60% report that their organisations are more, or much more actively engaged in addressing ESG issues because of Covid-19, with 38% indicating a neutral effect, and 2% less actively engaged.

The difference in the strength of declarations between the sectors is perhaps understandable, as NGOs' entire organisational mission is typically focused on addressing a core ESG issue/s, whereas this is not the case for corporates.

**Figure 9: The impact of Covid-19 and level of engagement in addressing ESG issues**



*In which of these ways has Covid-19 impacted your organisation's response to addressing environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues? My organisation has / will become...*

*Social programming issues dominate corporate and NGO responses to Covid-19*

We sought to identify the **types of ESG issues** that companies and non-profits have become more, or less engaged in due to Covid-19. We posed the question: Please briefly indicate issues that your organisation has become MORE actively engaged in as a result of Covid-19. The following table illustrates some of the typical types of responses received from both **NGOs** and **corporates**:



Exemplar **NGO** responses

**Social Programming**

- *Staff safety, wellbeing, diversity and inclusion*
- *We have trebled our impact through diverting more food to more organisations to feed more people*
- *There has been a disproportionate impact of health inequalities on BAME communities*
- *Addressing health inequalities*
- *As a mental health charity, continue to focus on our charitable mission to support our beneficiaries and wider strategy on social issues of mental health*
- *Raising more awareness of the plight of children and the effects of mental health during Covid-19*
- *We were already in this space pre-Covid but we have dialled up the work we are doing in the UK with families living below the poverty line and are doing more active campaigning*

**Governance and accountability**

- *Social and governance issues have come to the forefront since the pandemic hit*
- *Accountability to staff and people we serve; diversity, inclusion*

**Multiple issues**

- *Providing accurate, timely information to stakeholders about the impact of the pandemic and evolving guidance/policy in this space; providing a great digital offering to supporters to help them manage their condition during the pandemic; undertaking Covid-19 related research in to how the virus impacts people living with the condition; looking more long term at the environmental impact of Covid-19 on the NHS, economy and society*

Exemplar **Corporate** responses

**Social Programming**

- *Supporting education developed by charities*
- *Community support, health, emergency response funds*
- *Health and well-being of colleagues and customers*
- *Pivoting our NGO partnership to support their COVID-19 efforts in communities both locally and on a global level*
- *Supporting vulnerable customers*
- *Tackling digital exclusion*
- *Child safety online*
- *Now supporting food provision*
- *Social support and re-skilling*
- *Covid-19 testing sites, safe places for domestic abuse, addressing people living with cancer esp. those shielding (virtual Cancer consultations), supporting NHS111, stock donations for hygiene poverty, opened up free access for all care homes to our e-learning comprehensive training, ensuring vulnerable patients had deliveries, and many more activities*
- *Covid-19 has provided an urgent impetus to consideration of our organisation's broader, strategic approach to sustainability and to the importance of community-level resilience*

**Supply Chain**

- *Managing supply chain risks*



**Environment**

- *Reducing our impact on the environment*



It is clear from these *unprompted* responses that for both companies and non-profits, issues related to social programming at the community level (from food and mental health provision to re-skilling and tackling digital exclusion) have come very much to the fore in their enhanced response to ESG issues.

Conversely, when asked what issues organisations had become LESS actively engaged in as a result of Covid-19, typical types of responses received were:

 Exemplar <b>NGO</b> responses	Exemplar <b>Corporate</b> responses
<p><b>Non-financial partnering</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Strategic corporate partnerships development (focusing on collaboration) was paused during Covid-19 peak in Europe. Very specific collaboration opportunities with relevance for the Covid-19 reply were started / further developed</i></li> <li>• <i>Exploring opportunities for non-financial collaboration which is time-consuming and does not drive short-term income flows</i></li> <li>• <i>Delivery of less face to face volunteer support as services have moved to virtual and digital services</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Climate change / environmental issues</i></li> <li>• <i>Environmental - too focussed on income generation rather than environmental / social</i></li> <li>• <i>Less actively engaged re environmental considerations due to impact of Covid-19 on core business</i></li> <li>• <i>Environmental / climate issues</i></li> <li>• <i>Climate change specifically - although likely to become more actively engaged on these issues directly later in the year</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>We are less actively involved in supporting our 'Charity of the Year' etc.</i></li> <li>• <i>Not less actively engaged rather less budget allocated. Same, if not more importance given to all areas</i></li> <li>• <i>None (this from several respondents)</i></li> <li>• <i>None: Covid-19 response has been in addition to existing activity</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Non-financial partnering</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Face to face volunteering in schools and communities has come to a halt</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Energy Management</i></li> </ul> 

From these *unprompted* responses, it is striking how many non-profits appear to have dialled down their focus on environmental issues. Clearly, given the relationship between environmental and social issues – including the health impacts of the former on the latter – there is a risk that the pivot away from addressing environmental concerns will likely become problematic, should this change persist over time.

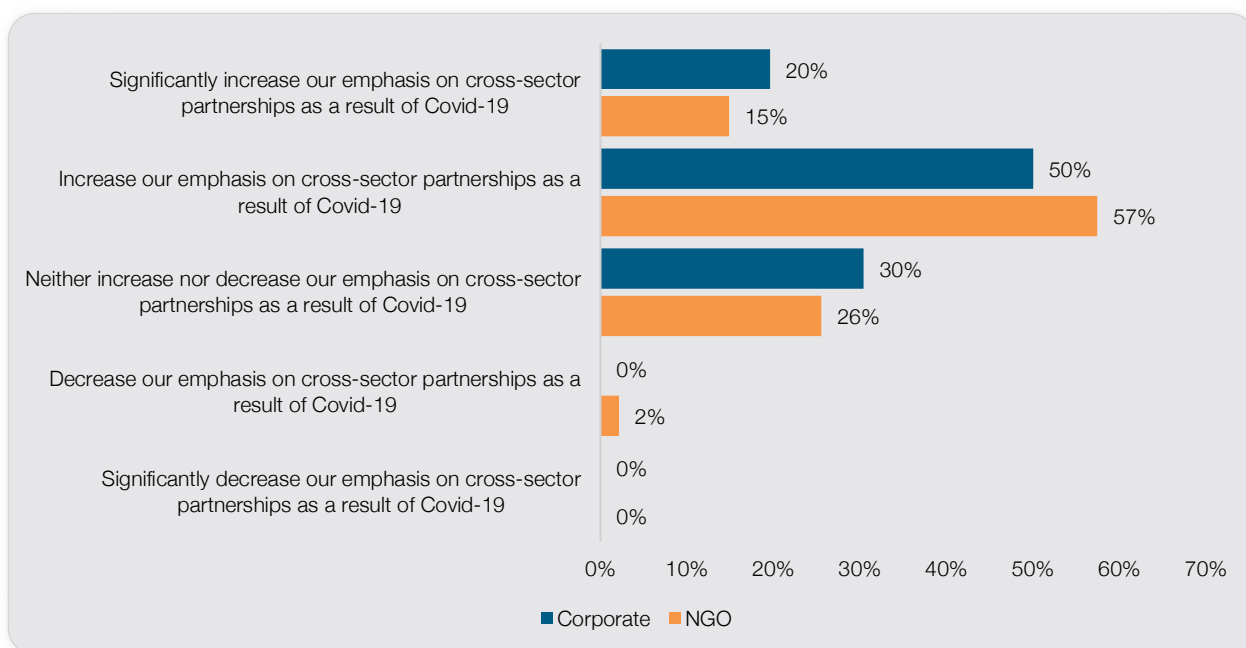
Conversely, it is notable that most companies seem to have found ways to maintain their approach to the broader ESG portfolio. There may be lessons in this for the non-profit sector. We return to this

theme in section 6.

*Enhanced role for cross-sector partnering in corporate-NGO responses to Covid-19*

Similarly, when practitioners were asked what role their partnerships are already playing – or will play – in their organisations’ responses to Covid-19 (figure 10), nearly three-quarters of corporates and non-profits (70% and 72% respectively) report that they have increased or will increase their emphasis on partnering as a result of Covid-19. We saw in a previous section the role that cross-sector partnerships play in enhancing business understanding of social and environmental issues – and in improving business practices for the better. It would appear that Covid-19 is reinforcing this role.

**Figure 10: The role of cross-sector partnerships in organisations’ responses to Covid-19**



*What role is / will partnerships with corporates / NGOs play in your organisation’s response to Covid-19. My organisation will...*

*And the pandemic is changing how corporates and non-profits partner*

In looking at the nature of partnerships and whether Covid-19 has changed *how* organisations engage in those partnerships (figure 11), 81% of all NGOs assert that the pandemic has either changed or changed significantly, how their organisation partners with corporates (with the rest reporting no change).

The equivalent figure on the corporates’ side is significantly lower, with nearly half (48%) reporting that the pandemic has changed, or significantly changed how they partner with non-profits. Just over half (52%) reported no changes in this regard.



**Figure 11: Has Covid-19 changed how organisations engage in partnerships?**



*Has Covid-19 changed HOW your organisation engages in partnership with corporate / NGO organisations.*

Regarding how companies and non-profits have changed their collaborations due to the pandemic, several themes emerged from the roundtable qualitative discussions that provided additional data for this Barometer. They relate to adaptations in modes of engagement, including the following:

- *Re-purposing* of earmarked and pre-committed initiatives, following NGO assessment of the likely impact of the pandemic on programming.
- Some businesses (particularly those facing strong financial headwinds) are placing *greater emphasis on deploying / mobilising their product, process, and people assets* in collaboration with their non-profit partnerships whilst restraining their financial investments.
- In this moment of disruption, *all modes of engagement appear to be on the table*. Philanthropy is (temporarily) back on the table alongside more traditional community investment. However, the trend from cause-related marketing, to shared value, and more recently, pursuit of purpose-driven growth for whole businesses and brands remains strong.
- *Re-imagination*: Taking advantage of the moment, and the paradoxically greater access to senior stakeholders made possible by the crisis, some collaborations are re-thinking their partnerships - undertaking considered mid-term reviews to identify how to reframe and drive greater value and impact from existing strategic partnerships.
- *Collective impact and collaboration*: From concept to action – organisations across sectors are drawing on the experience of the pandemic – working to remove the barriers to truly effective intra and cross-sector, multi-stakeholder collaboration.
- *Digital, tech and pace*: In relation to all the above, companies and non-profits are increasingly seeking to fully harness the potential of digital and other tech - drawing on cross-sector partnerships to create further value for society.

It seems reasonable therefore to conclude that Covid-19 has significantly impacted many aspects of the ESG agenda and cross-sector partnering. The pandemic's *impact* on corporate and non-profit approaches to *ESG issues* appears to be strongly positive; however, there is a risk that negative effects arise as, in particular, non-profits dial down on environmental issues in favour of seemingly more pressing social issues. It is clear that *cross-sector partnering is playing a vitally important role* in organisations' responses to the pandemic; and that Covid-19 is changing *how companies and non-profits engage* in partnership with each other.

It will be interesting to see through future editions of the Barometer, whether and to what extent these effects endure.

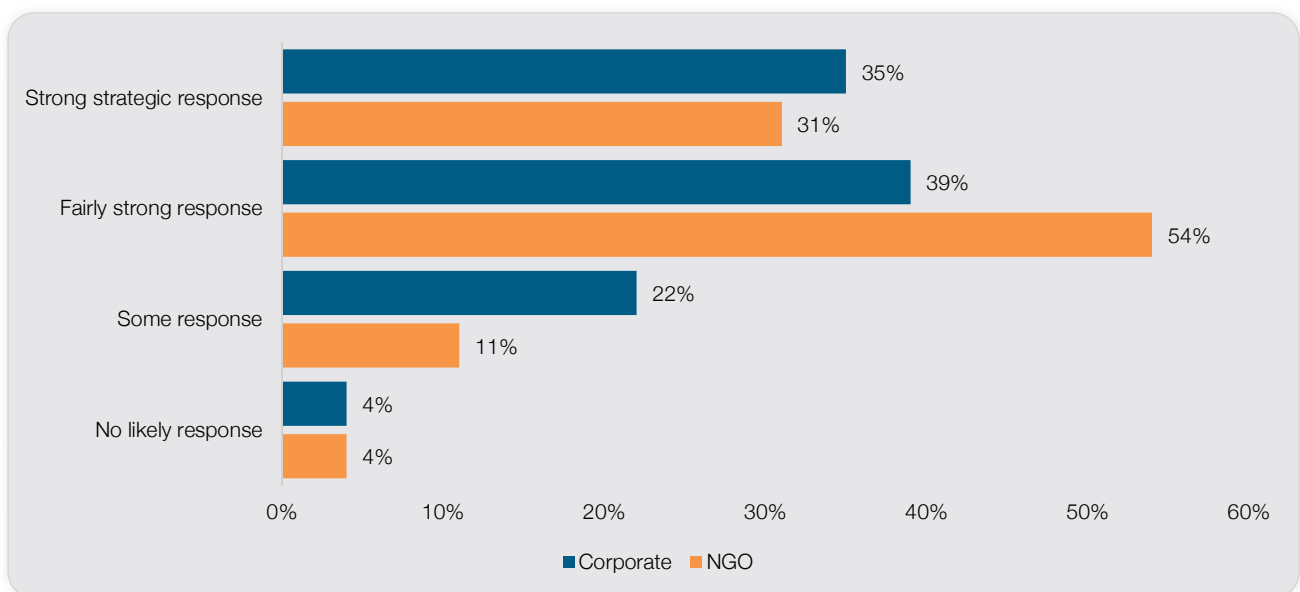
## 6. The impact of the antiracism movement

*Many companies and non-profits report that their organisations are making a strong and strategic response*

Given the enormity of the world’s response to the death of George Floyd during his forceful arrest by Minneapolis Police in May of this year, and public and media interest in the antiracism and the #BlackLivesMatter movement that followed, the 2020 Barometer included a section dedicated to examining corporate and non-profit responses to the issues raised, and the implications for cross-sector partnering.

Responses from both companies and non-profits indicate (figure 12) that the vast majority of organisations are taking or are set to take clear steps in their response to the antiracism movement. Around three quarters of corporate respondents (74%) and over four-fifths of non-profits (85%) expect their organisation to make a fairly strong, or strong strategic response to the issues raised by the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Most of the rest of the responding corporates and NGOs expect that their organisation will make some response, with only 4% of organisations in each sector expecting no response from their organisations.

**Figure 12: Responses to issues raised by the #BlackLivesMatter movement**



*What type of response, if any, are you expecting your organisation to make as a result of issues raised by the #BlackLivesMatter movement, over the next year?*

Asked why their organisations were making / set to make the above responses, the following are illustrative of the types of **unprompted** comments shared by respondents:



Exemplar NGO responses

**Employees**

- *Employee demand*
- *Because it matters and because it's very important to our staff.*
- *We have made commitments at the most senior level as a result of an Ethnic Diversity report that was recently published internally which highlighted the strong need to review how our organisation works. We have a strong BAME network who are leading the way and supporting the organisation on this journey. We are addressing it across all teams in all departments. I believe we will change significantly as a result even it takes time.*

**Service Users**

- *We acknowledge that our services are not reaching a diverse user-base which is not reflective of the need. We are actively seeking to address this.*
- *We want workforce to reflect customer base and London population more widely.*
- *Important to demonstrate inclusivity across ALL of our services and programmes, re-pivoting our strategy and narrative to ensure BAME communities explicitly addressed in all our goals.*
- *Because a) we are already deficient in some areas (e.g. leadership) and b) because we are making a strategic move towards becoming ever more of an international/African organisation (from principally UK-led).*
- *COVID-19 has highlighted real challenges for black men's health - which we will be giving greater attention to - and partnering with other charities to address.*

**Social justice**

- *It highlights structural inequalities/injustice and a need for us to re-think our external approach, internal governance and organisational values/policies associated*

Exemplar Corporate responses

**Employees**

- *It is important that we respond to the interests and wellbeing of our employees.*
- *Clear internal desire to continue to listen, engage and improve around the issue.*
- *Maintaining the safety of colleagues.*
- *#BLM has focused efforts to strengthen our existing D&I commitments - and to drive progress internally.*
- *Because it matters to our colleagues.*

**Service Users**

- *Because it matters to customers.*
- *Growing opportunities for diverse customers is a priority.*

**Social justice**

- *We care about diversity and inclusion*

**Miscellaneous**

- *Inclusion team recently hired to create strategy for Inclusion and Diversity.*
- *Strong engagement through both internal and external communication on importance of established values of diversity and inclusion; longer-term consideration of broader-spectrum US-specific response to D&I.*
- *Serious intent from C-suite and Board to use the opportunity as a springboard to go further than before.*
- *Chairman announcement: Appointed Chief Diversity Officer at corporate and business unit level. CEO Diversity Council in place. Active sponsorship of Affinity Groups. New Inclusion & Diversity KPIs. Transparency, talent development and educational opportunity scholarships.*
- *We have always been strong in the D&I area, but we have been more vocal on our stance on the issue recently.*

*with better representing BAME populations and diversifying our workforce (particularly in leadership roles).*

- *Systemic racism is something we have to address as a humanitarian organisation.*
- *Racism and colonialism are important and uncomfortable issues for INGOs based in the Global North and dismantling these in internal structures and in shifting power is something we have been working on already. The BLM movement has brought greater focus and emphasis to the strategic changes that urgently need to be made.*
- *Increased emphasis on EDI.*
- *BLM has led to the organisation challenging itself in many ways including looking at how we can become deliberately and actively anti-racist as well as more diverse generally...*

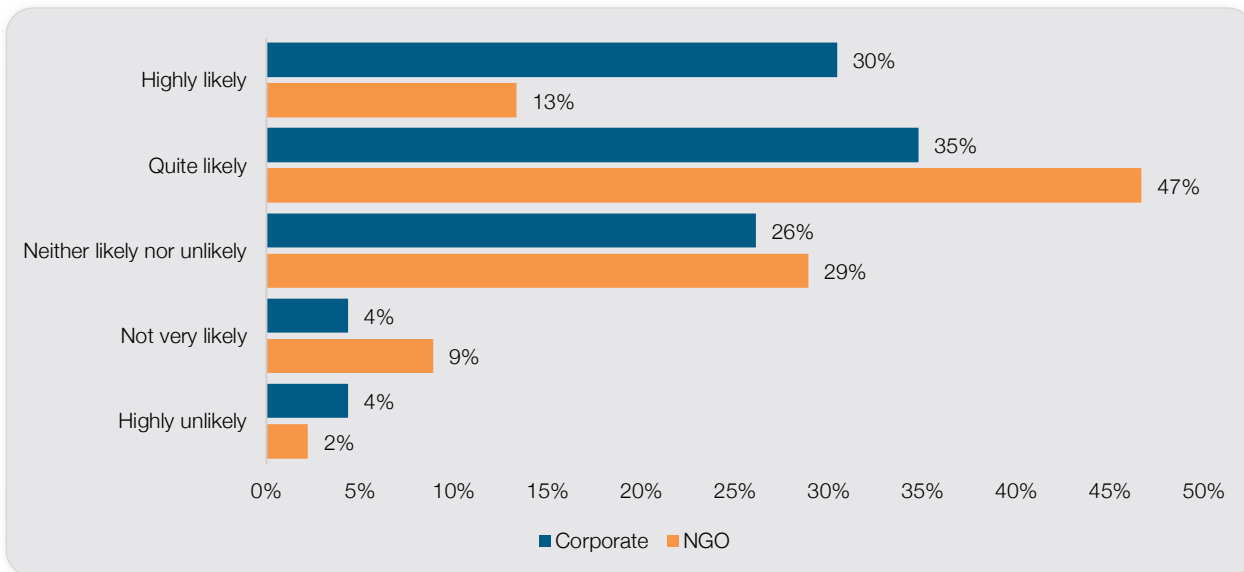


We can conclude from both the responses in figure 12 and the above *unprompted* commentary that the anti-racism movement appears to have sparked deliberate action in corporate and non-profit organisations. There are often multiple reasons for organisations committing to change, but these reasons cluster around the moral case for social justice, pressure from employees, as well as the opportunity to better engage existing or access new service users and customers.

*A significant majority of companies and NGOs expect the issues raised by the #BlackLivesMatter movement to feature in their partnerships – including on policy, advocacy, and programmatic areas*

We have seen that the responses from corporate and non-profit organisations appear to reflect the depth of feeling triggered by the events surrounding the highly publicised death of George Floyd. When asked (figure 13) about the extent to which respondents expect the antiracism issues raised by the #BlackLivesMatter movement to feature in their organisations' partnerships (in, for example, policy, advocacy or programmatic areas) in the coming year, around two-thirds (66% of corporates and 60% of NGOs) report that this is either quite, or highly likely.

**Figure 13: The extent to which the issues raised by #BlackLivesMatter movement will feature in your organisation’s partnerships in the coming year**



*To what extent do you expect issues raised by the #BlackLivesMatter movement to feature in your organisation’s partnerships (on e.g. policy, advocacy or programmatic areas) with non-profits or corporates in the coming year? I envisage partnerships addressing #BlackLivesMatter to be...*

Asked *why* they responded as in figure 13, a range of *unprompted* responses emerged which are typified by the following:

“	Exemplar <b>NGO</b> responses	Exemplar <b>Corporate</b> responses
<b>Targeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It's been acknowledged that projects specifically focusing on BAME communities will help to address our imbalance in service use. This in turn will influence which businesses we might seek funding from.</li> <li>We are already seeing companies interested in us due to our diversity.</li> <li>The movement opens up a conversation with partners about programmes and advocacy work that might otherwise have been uncomfortable/taken a backseat to other priorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>#BLM has focused attention.</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are addressing issues of Race as part of our D&amp;I agenda linked to community engagement anyway.</li> <li>Delivered through a portfolio of long-standing, high-impact and innovative partners our programmes are designed to drive change, and in doing so address racial inequities and injustices.</li> <li>We wish to demonstrate our commitment to fairness, inclusion and respect at all times and to improve measurably.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many organisations are responding to the issues so it makes sense to work together.</li> <li>Because the international development</li> </ul>	<p><b>Miscellaneous</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uncertainty as to longer-term, US-specific response and what the contribution of</li> </ul>

*sector needs to change the way it works and the way it portrays the people it is working with and for. I think Partnerships could play a role in this.*

**Miscellaneous**

- *When my NGO will address racism it is more likely to be in recruitment, ways of working, operational issues... Indirectly we work on racism through our work on inequality, which consistently highlights how people from ethnic minorities, particularly women, are often the most marginalised.*
- *I think it will take time for companies (and NGOs) to think through properly how to go beyond broad statements of intent to partnerships that actually address the root causes of systemic racism. I'm not sure anyone has the answers of what an effective partnership in this space could look like.*

*partnerships might be in support of it.*

- *We don't currently address this issue through partnerships.*
- *We are monitoring this to assess an appropriate response. Meanwhile, we are starting to focus attention on representation of black talent in our leadership pipeline and senior positions.*



It seems clear that the projection of systemic racism onto public consciousness triggered by the death of George Floyd – and the antiracism movement galvanised by those events – has caused most companies and non-profits engaged in this study to actively review their policies and practices around issues of racism, inclusion and diversity. Whether driven by a values-led belief in social justice, pressure from employees, or a desire to better serve new and existing customers and service users, most respondents report that their companies and non-profits are taking a fairly strong strategic approach in their responses to addressing these issues. A clear majority also indicate that cross-sector partnerships will likely play a role in their responses to the issues raised by the antiracism movement – primarily to enhance the impact of their efforts through collaborative working.



*“There has been massive commitment across the board to embedding the learnings from the movement into our long-term strategy in every area of the organisation.”*



The above quote does not represent the views of all participating companies and non-profits in the 2020 Barometer. It does, however, capture the direction of travel conveyed by most respondents regarding addressing racism in their organisations. It will be interesting to see through future editions of the Barometer, whether, and to what extent, these sentiments translate into reality.

## Part 3: Mid-term trends, prospects, and anticipated developments in partnerships

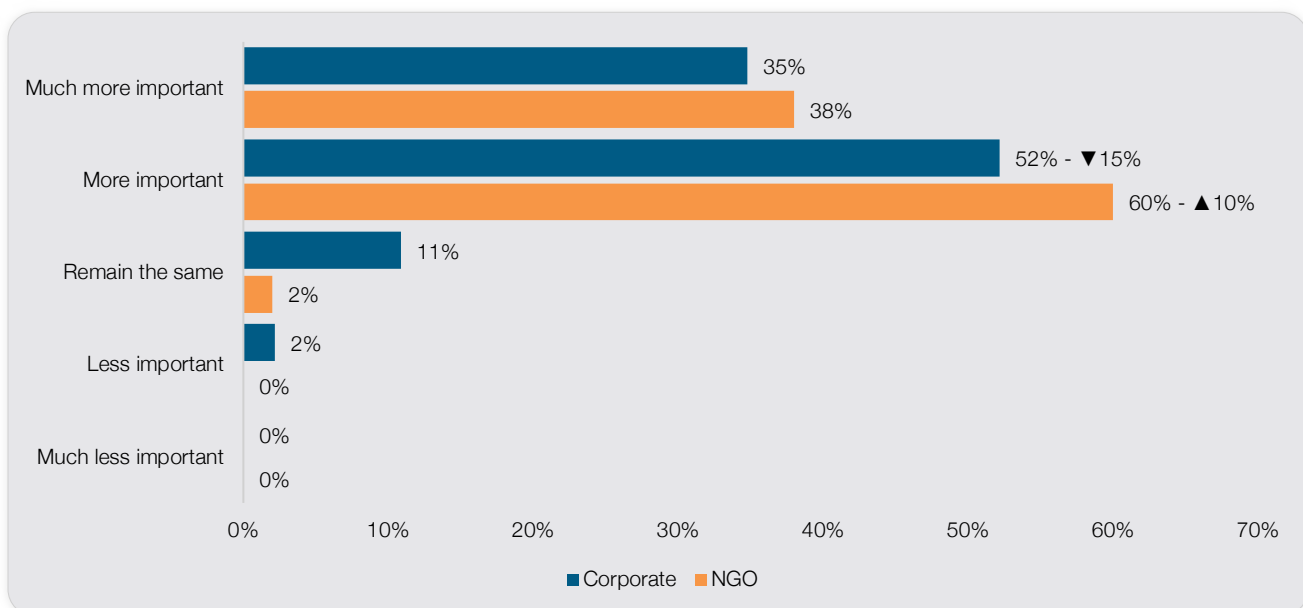
### 8. Likely importance of partnerships in the mid-term

*Cross-sector partnerships likely to become even more important to companies and non-profits over the next three years*

Despite the challenges and turbulence caused by the global Covid-19 pandemic, it is gratifying to report that the overwhelming majority of practitioners from both sides of the partnering arena expect that partnerships between companies and NGO will become even more important over the coming three years.

More NGOs (98%) anticipate this growing rise in the importance of cross-sector partnering than their corporate counterparts, but nearly nine out of ten (87%) of corporates expect that partnerships between the sectors will play a more or much more important role in the coming three years (figure 14).

**Figure 15: The future importance of corporate-NGO partnerships:**



*What is your expectation of the role that partnerships will play in the corporate or NGO agenda over the next three years? Would you say they are likely to become.....?*

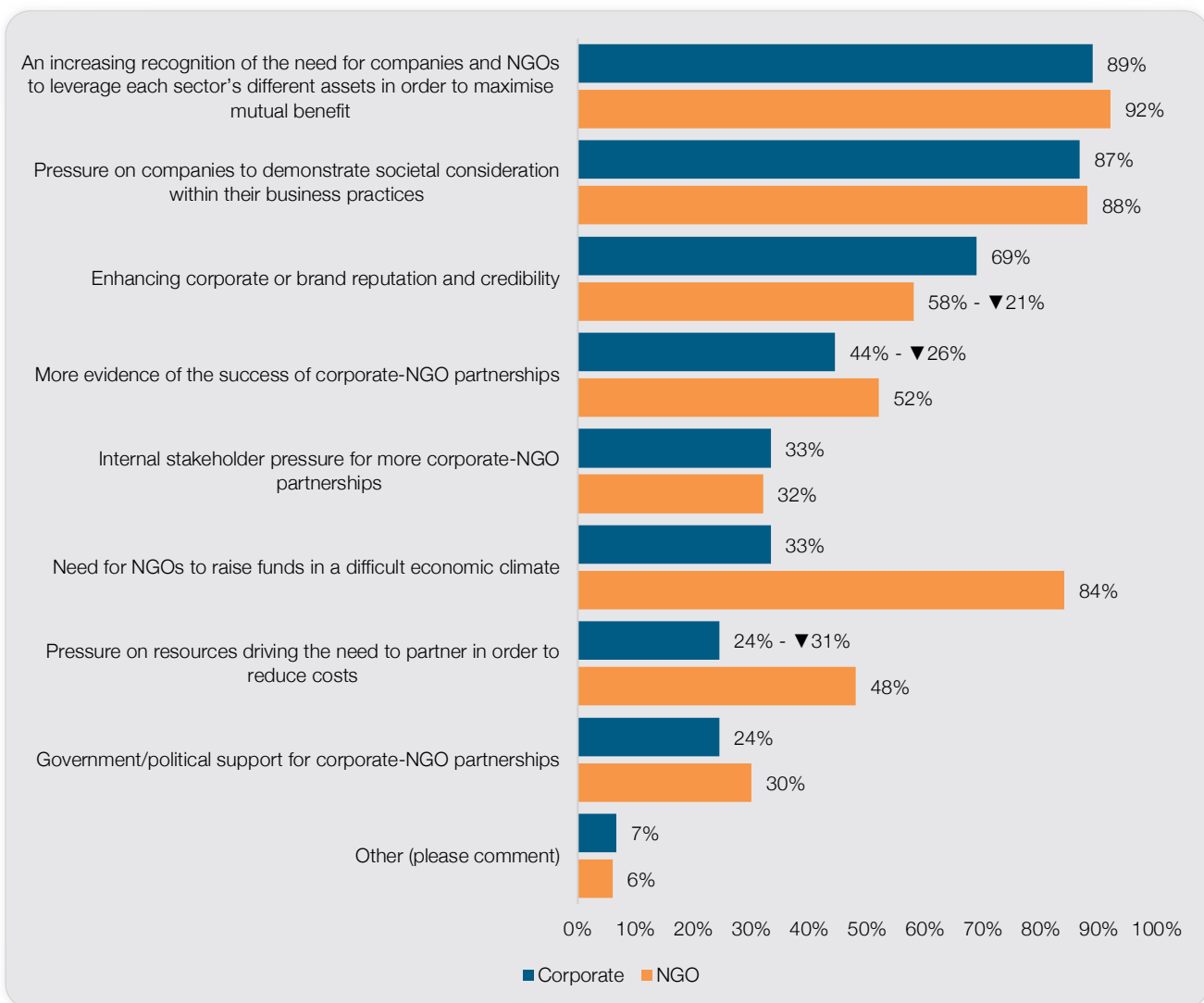
### 9. Drivers of change

Invited to identify factors that will drive the likely growing importance of cross-sector partnerships in the medium term, approximately nine out of ten corporates and NGOs cite the need to leverage each other's assets to maximise the mutual benefits of partnerships (figure 16).

Societal and stakeholder pressure on companies to demonstrate societal considerations in their business practices is similarly identified as a key likely driver of the importance of partnering across sectors. And NGOs highlight the ongoing need to raise funds in resource-constrained times as a third key factor.

The need to enhance corporate brand or reputation and credibility remains an important factor for corporates, but dips significantly (by 21%) as a factor for NGOs this year. Conversely, and perhaps surprisingly, given difficult economic circumstances which are likely to continue into the next year, corporates are markedly down (by over 30%) year on year in seeing a need for partnerships to help reduce their costs.

**Figure 16: The reasons why partnerships may become more important over the next three years:**

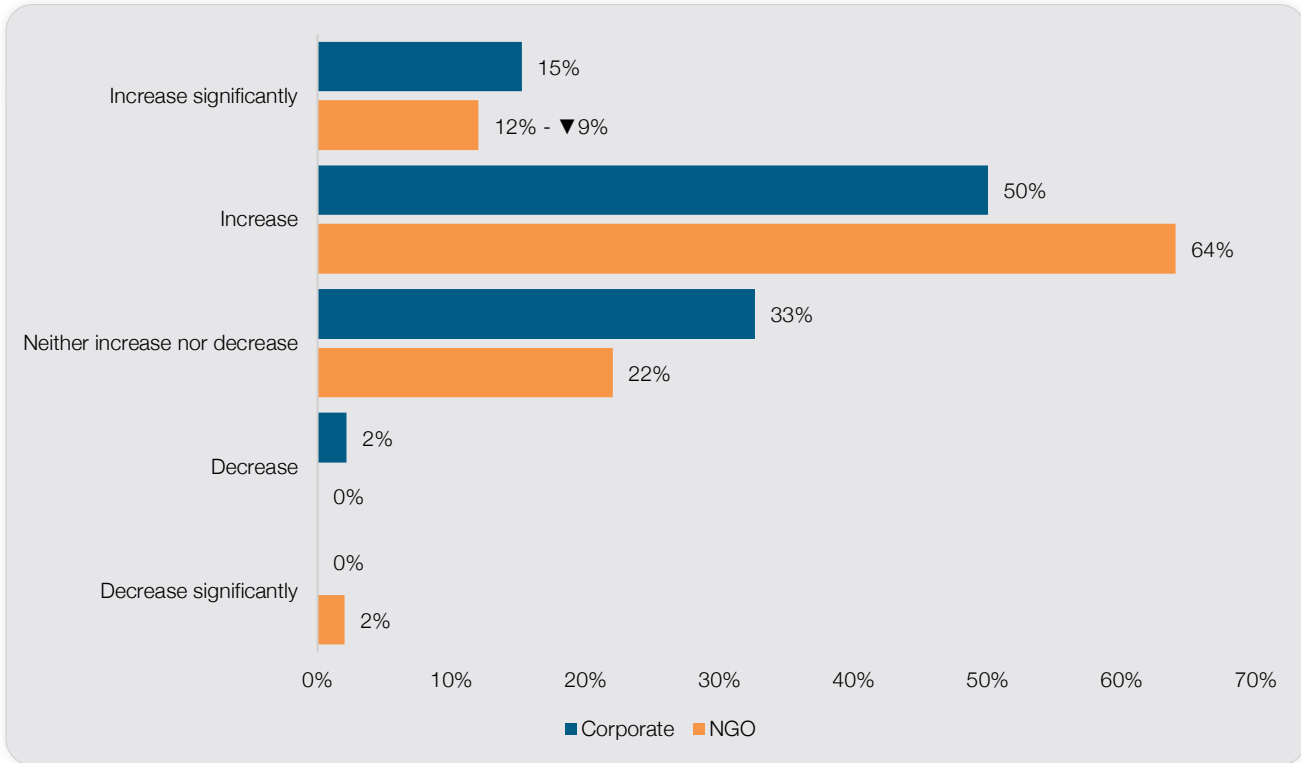


*In your view, what factors are likely to make corporate-NGO partnerships more important in the next three years?*



10. The outlook for investments in cross-sector partnerships over the mid-term

Figure 17: Future investment in partnerships



*Is your investment (commitment, time, resources, etc) in corporate-NGO partnerships likely to increase or decrease over the next 3 years?*

The above findings on the likely future importance and drivers of cross-sector partnering translate into sentiments regarding likely future investments in partnerships and whether these are expected to increase or decrease over the next three years (figure 17). Two-thirds of corporate respondents and three-quarters of those representing NGOs hold the clear view that their level of investment (commitment, time, resources, etc.) are likely to increase or increase significantly in the years ahead.

These findings are broadly in line with previous years, and again speak to the strength of the underlying drivers for corporate-NGO partnerships – and the value investments in such partnerships can yield. That sentiments around the future importance of, and investments in, partnerships has remained so strong and positive in such seminally uncertain and challenging times, is testament to the value of cross-sector collaboration.

## Concluding remarks

It has been pleasing to reflect that the findings in this 2020 Barometer report align with the previously expressed sentiments and predictions made by partnership practitioners across the corporate and NGO communities in previous years.

The overall trend and big picture shows the enduring move towards more strategic, problem-solving partnerships; and partnerships continue to play an important role, both in improving business understanding of ESG issues and in improving business practices for the better – whilst securing resources and helping non-profits to better fulfil their missions.

We have seen again this year that the most admired partnerships illustrate the above features – particularly in the bold, systemic changes that the Tesco-WWF partnership is seeking to make.

Alongside these evolutions, cross-sector partnerships professionals have had to respond to two significant events in 2020. Covid-19 has significantly impacted many aspects of the ESG agenda and cross-sector partnering. The pandemic's impact on corporate and non-profit approaches to ESG issues appears to be strongly positive. There is, however, a risk that negative effects arise as, in particular, non-profits dial down on environmental issues in favour of seemingly more pressing social issues. It is also clear that cross-sector partnering is playing a vitally important role in organisations' responses to the pandemic. And Covid-19 is changing how companies and non-profits engage in partnership with each other.

It also seems clear that the projection of systemic racism onto public consciousness triggered by the death of George Floyd – and the antiracism movement galvanised by those events has caused most companies and non-profits engaged in this study to actively review their policies and practices around issues of racism, inclusion and diversity. A clear majority also indicate that cross-sector partnerships will likely play a role in their responses to the issues raised by the antiracism movement – primarily to enhance the impact of their efforts through collaborative working.

Finally, it has been striking to find that over a third of NGOs (37%) and around a quarter of corporates (26%) state that their non-profit organisations (or partner organisations) do *not* have a holistic ESG plan or framework. In a world in which *"trust us because ours is a good cause"* is unlikely to meet stakeholder expectation, this finding seems a clear risk to non-profits.

As companies and non-profits work to build back better post-pandemic, it will be interesting to see whether the 2021 Barometer will show any shifts on these and other topics. We wish all our readers and contributors well – and we certainly hope that we will be in a post-pandemic world when our next edition of the Barometer report is published!

**Manny Amadi, MVO**

**CEO, C&E Advisory**

## About the Barometer

### Methodology

The C&E Corporate-NGO Partnerships Barometer 2020 was compiled using responses to a confidential online survey of 110 leading UK-based companies and NGOs engaged in corporate-NGO partnerships. The survey was supplemented by two roundtable discussions providing qualitative insights.

The number of respondents reflects an ever-growing interest in the corporate-NGO partnering agenda. Practitioners on both sides of corporate-NGO partnerships clearly have a keen interest in the Barometer because it allows them to have a sector-wide perspective on the evolution of the cross-sector partnering landscape.

This year's survey included a mixture of new and previously asked questions. Thanks to this combination of questions we have been able to identify new challenges and opportunities in partnering, whilst simultaneously enabling accurate and effective comparison of data against Barometer readings from previous years.

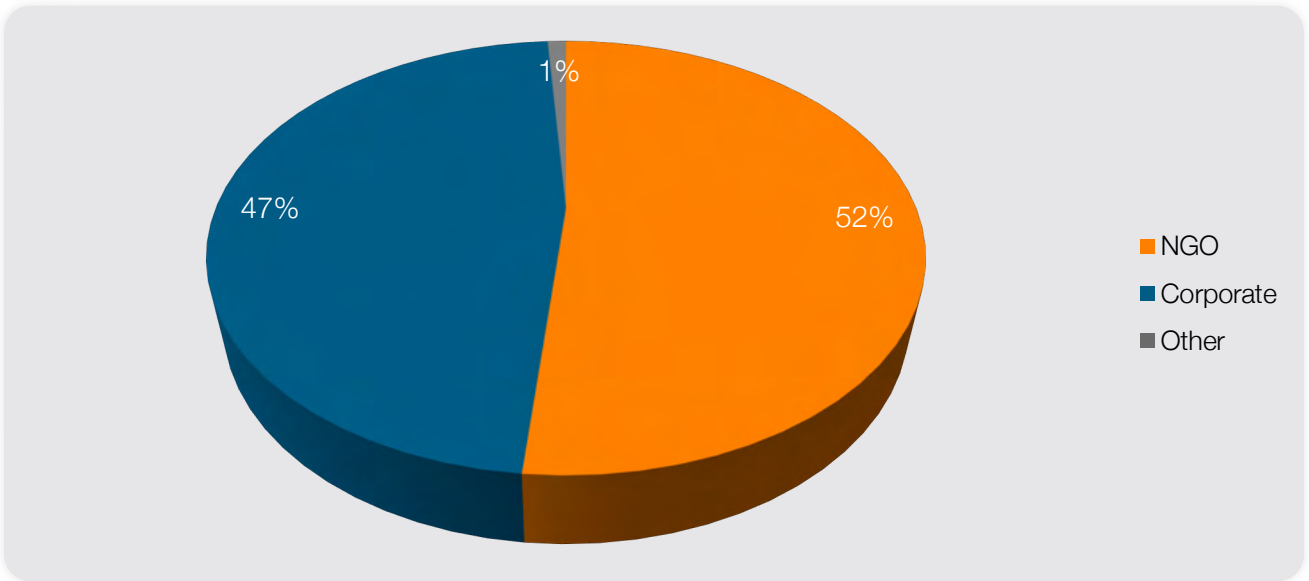
The online survey and roundtables took place during July 2020.

### The Sample

The online survey was undertaken by 110 respondents all of whom were involved in cross-sector partnerships. Of these, corporate sector respondents were drawn mainly from the FTSE100, Interbrand's Best Global Brands Ranking, and Business in the Community's Corporate Responsibility Index. NGO respondents were drawn mainly from the leading UK charities – by brand and revenue ranking. Our sincere thanks to all who took part.

The distribution of 48% corporate (including 1% other which refers to Corporate Foundations) and 52% NGOs is well balanced.

**Figure 18: Sector representation**



*Are you completing this survey on behalf of a “not for profit” organisation (NGO) or a corporate?*

Respondents to the survey held a diverse range of professional roles all directly engaged in or overseeing corporate-NGO partnerships from a senior level.

**Figure 19: Respondent’s roles**



*What is your role?*

## About C&E Advisory

C&E is a leading specialist ‘business and society’ consultancy. We work with some of the world’s foremost businesses, NGOs and High Net-Worth Individuals, helping them secure sustainable value – shareholder, social and environmental. Our practice areas cover strategy, programme design, oversight and reviews, performance measurement and reporting, high performance team development and leadership coaching.

And because today’s challenges and opportunities require new ways of thinking, C&E is particularly adept at inspiring and enabling sometimes surprising cross-sector collaborations. We have advised – and continue to advise – on some of the world’s leading and best-known corporate-NGO partnerships. C&E also advises on all aspects of the shared value agenda.

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

## Appendix

Survey respondents (excluding organisations wishing to remain anonymous)

### Corporates

Allianz  
Anglo American  
Aviva  
Boots UK  
BP plc  
Burgess Salmon LLP  
CEMEX  
Citi  
Dixons Carphone  
DLA Piper  
DP World  
Experian  
GE (General Electric)  
Greene King  
Heathrow  
IHG (InterContinental Hotels Group)  
Jaguar Land Rover  
Morgan Sindall Group  
NatWest Group  
Roche Diabetes Care  
Telefonica UK (O2)  
Tesco  
Unilever  
Walgreens Boots Alliance  
WarnerMedia

### NGOs

Age UK  
Back Up  
Blue Cross  
British Lung Foundation and Asthma UK  
British Red Cross  
Comic Relief  
Diabetes UK  
FareShare  
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)  
Independent Age  
Leonard Cheshire  
Macmillan Cancer Support  
Malaria No More UK  
Marie Curie  
Mind  
National Trust for Scotland  
NSPCC  
Oxfam  
Peabody  
Plan International  
Rainbow Trust Children's Charity  
Remember A Charity  
Royal National Institute of Blind People  
Save the Children UK  
St Christopher's Hospice  
St John Ambulance  
Stroke Association  
The Children's Society  
WaterAid  
Woodland Trust  
World Vision International  
Youth Sport Trust International