PERCEPTIONS OF SMALL AND LARGE NGOS & CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

18 November 2021
GB Partner Meeting
www.developmentcompass.org
@DevEngageLab
What is the public's view of charities partnering with corporations? What are perceptions by segment or age? Is there scepticism of corporates among young people?
The most agreed with statement was that **businesses that partner with charities are trying to boost their reputation** (46% agree).

But that doesn’t mean these organisations are perceived as less trustworthy. The public says that it does not see partnerships with private sector businesses as damaging; **only 21% agree that business partnerships compromise organisations.**

Note that around 1 in 4 don’t know, so uncertainty is high.

Question: Below are statements about corporate partnerships between private sector businesses and charities. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

**Charities that partner with private sector corporations are compromised and less-trustworthy**

- Strongly agree: 5%
- Agree: 16%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 34%
- Disagree: 16%
- Strongly disagree: 4%
- Don’t know: 25%

**Private sector corporations that partner with charities are just trying to boost their reputation and enhance their brand**

- Strongly agree: 14%
- Agree: 32%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 26%
- Disagree: 6%
- Strongly disagree: 2%
- Don’t know: 21%

**Partnering with private sector corporations is a smart way for charities to increase their resources and impact**

- Strongly agree: 5%
- Agree: 34%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 27%
- Disagree: 6%
- Strongly disagree: 3%
- Don’t know: 25%

**Corporate partnerships with charities effectively harnesses the power of business to achieve wider social goals**

- Strongly agree: 4%
- Agree: 28%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 31%
- Disagree: 7%
- Strongly disagree: 4%
- Don’t know: 27%
WHO IS MORE CYNICAL, SCEPTICAL, OR CAN SEE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS?

• There are almost no significant and not any meaningful differences by age groups

• Women are slightly more sceptical than men:
  • 51% of women agree businesses just trying to boost brand with partnerships with charities (cf. 40% of men agree)
  • 26% of women agree business partnerships damage trustworthiness of charities (cf. 17% of men agree)

• University education appears to boost perceptions that partnerships can be effective in increasing resources and harnessing power of business (see next slide)

• More engaged segments are both more sceptical and more convinced of the potential of partnerships (see slide after next)
Although university education appears to increase cynicism about brand boosting, it also boosts perceptions that partnerships can be effective in increasing resources and harnessing power of business.

There were no meaningful differences in these latter two items among age groups and gender, but university education accounts for 15 and 12 percentage point gaps.

Of university degree holders think respondents NGO-private partnerships are all about the image and reputation.

Question: Below are statements about corporate partnerships between private sector businesses and charities. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (% who agree)

Sample size n=8,281 | Base: GB adults | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork by YouGov, 23 Sep – 25 Oct 2021
There tends to be a gradual increase in agreement across all four items as respondents are more engaged. Like education, engagement appears to increase both cynicism and perceived benefits.

The broadly linear relationship has two exceptions: there is greater agreement among the Negatively Engaged (especially around organisations being compromised) and the Marginally Engaged are more cynical than all but the highest engagement segments.

63% Of fully engaged respondents think partnerships are all about the image and reputation

Question: Below are statements about corporate partnerships between private sector businesses and charities. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (% who agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Negatively engaged</th>
<th>Totally disengaged</th>
<th>Marginally engaged</th>
<th>Transactionally engaged</th>
<th>Purposively engaged</th>
<th>Fully engaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charities that partner with private sector corporations are compromised and less-trustworthy</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector corporations that partner with charities are just trying to boost their reputation and enhance their brand</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnering with private sector corporations is a smart way for charities to increase their resources and impact</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate partnerships with charities effectively harness the power of business to achieve wider social goals</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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KEY INSIGHTS

• In general, the public don’t have a strong stated aversion to charity-business partnerships.

• But, there is cynicism about the motives of private sector corporations.

• It is only with university education or higher levels of engagement that the public sees the benefits of such partnerships.

• But also greater cynicism and concerns about integrity – such partnerships appear to be a double-edged sword to be managed among supporters.
Public perceptions of small and large NGOs/charities (effectiveness, efficacy, trustworthiness and honesty) and propensity to give / take action given certain characteristics
On average, the British public see only small differences between large and small NGOs effectiveness and efficiency in terms of reducing poverty in poor countries.

A significant proportion of the GB public don’t have views on the effectiveness efficiency of large/small NGOs.

The large percentage of Don’t knows suggests that this is an area can improve communications on: more effective and efficient are better more generally, size isn’t a determining factor.

**Perceptions of large/small NGOs: Effectiveness & Efficiency**

**EFFECTIVENESS**

**EFFICIENCY**

Question: There are very large development NGOs/charities that work in poor countries and some very small ones. Thinking about small/large development NGOs/charities that work to reduce poverty in poor countries, please rate these NGOs/charities on the following criteria using scale where 1 is low and 5 is high.

Sample size n=8,281 | Base: GB adults | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork by YouGov, 23 Sep – 25 Oct 2021
The data here show a clear (and significant) relationship between size and trustworthiness and honesty: large organisations are seen as less trustworthy and honest than small organisations.

Similar to effectiveness and efficiency, roughly 4 in 10 British respondents say they Don’t know on trustworthiness and honesty.

There is a communications opportunity here for all NGOs, but particularly larger organisations.
It’s worth reiterating that the differences between large and small NGOs on effectiveness and efficiency are small.

The public see large and small organisations differently when evaluating NGOs on trustworthiness and honesty.

Question: There are very large development NGOs/charities that work in poor countries and some very small ones. Thinking about small/large development NGOs/charities that work to reduce poverty in poor countries, please rate these NGOs/charities on the following criteria using scale where 1 is low and 5 is high.

- Trustworthy
- Honest
- Efficient
- Effective

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Breaking this down by DEL’s audience segments, perceptions of large and small organisations is related to engagement. On balance, more engaged audiences rate both large and small orgs more positively (right of mid-scale).

Large and small orgs are not seen differently in terms of effectiveness by any audience group.

The largest differences are for honesty and trustworthiness, especially for Marginally, Transactionally and Purposively Engaged audiences.

The Fully Engaged audience perceive no differences between large and small NGOs on effectiveness and efficiency, and relatively small differences on honesty and trustworthiness.

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Where there is opinion on partnerships, it leans more favourably than not. A very small percentage (11%) of the British public do not think it is important to develop partnerships with the local community.

However, more than 2 in 10 say neither important or unimportant and a further 2 in 10 say they Don’t know.

**44%**

think it’s important for larger NGOs to partner with local organisations to deliver programmes

Question: How important is it to you personally that large international development NGOs partner with NGOs that work in the local community to deliver aid programmes and funding?

Sample size n=8,281 | Base: GB adults | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork by YouGov, 23 Sep – 25 Oct 2021
Very small proportions of engaged audiences think that partnering with NGOs in the local community is unimportant. For Transactionally Engaged audiences, nearly 2/3 (63%) say it is important, rising to 83% for the Fully Engaged group. Even among the Marginally Engaged group, 45% say it is important, but more than a quarter say it is neither (un)important and nearly 2 in 10 say Don’t know. 83% of Fully Engaged respondents think it is important for larger NGOs to partner with local organisations to deliver programmes.
FUNDING NGOS WHO WORK IN POOR COUNTRIES HELPS BUILD CAPACITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Only 9% of the British public disagree with the statement that aid programmes help build capacity and self-sufficiency in local communities.

Nearly a quarter of the public (24%) say they don’t know which suggests there is an opportunity for communicating capacity building work with the public. Likewise, 24% don’t have a strong view, so open to influence.

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Again, we see a strong relationship between level of engagement and views of capacity and self-sufficiency. It is very important for the most engaged audiences and falls as engagement declines.

It is also clear that the proportion of Don’t knows increase as engagement decreases.

This is an issue that is live and important for engaged audiences.

Question: Funding NGOs who work in poor countries to deliver aid programmes helps build capacity and self-sufficiency in local communities

Sample size n=8,281 | Base: GB adults | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork by YouGov, 23 Sep – 25 Oct 2021
CONJOINT DESIGN

• We used a conjoint design to test the causal impact of four different dimensions simultaneously. We were primarily interested in the small vs large issue, but asked respondents to consider other factors when deciding whether to
  • Donate
  • Sign a petition

• Dimensions
  • Large or small NGO/charity
  • Headquartered in UK or in developing country
  • Region the NGO/charity worked in
  • Sector / Issue (Health, education, women and girls, WASH, a range)
CONJOINT DESIGN

• Respondents were assigned to only one of the two outcome measures (i.e. they didn’t do both, so no holdover effects between outcomes)

• They saw three random profiles each (power).

• Profiles are fully randomised meaning respondents may have seen small vs large, large vs large, small vs small, or large vs small – the same logic applies to all attributes

• Outcome measures:
  • **Donate**: Thinking about development NGOs/charities that work to reduce poverty in poor countries, we are now going to present to you two NGOs. Please indicate which of the following NGOs/charities you would be more likely to donate to if asked?
  • **Petition**: Thinking about development NGOs/charities that work to reduce poverty in poor countries, we are now going to present to you two NGOs/charities. Please indicate which if the following NGOs/charities you would you be more likely to sign a petition if asked?
There is an advantage for small NGOs/charities when respondents state their preferences. But respondents prefer to donate to NGOs/charities that are headquartered in the UK. Is this casual racism or a signal that the public believes that such organisations are more easily held to account?

The regional preferences make sense in terms of physical and mental geographies of UK aid and developmental need, with a preference for MENA and SSA over the more distant regions.

**WASH is the clear winner** in terms of the issues that people would donate to right now, holding all other dimensions constant. Repeated concerns about focussing on women and girls in the abstract.
The startling thing for petitions is that respondents respond in almost identical ways as donations, and remember that these are different groups of respondents so it is not just the same people responding in the same way.

The dropping out of MENA as positive and significant among the regions is the only substantial change. Is it that respondents are more wary of organisations asking for petitions in that part of world – more contentious politics, but ok to donate money.

The advantage of small NGOs/charities over bigger NGOs/charities is ever so slightly greater for petitions than donations, but only marginally so.

The difference between the two outcomes is well illustrated by flicking back and forth …

Sample size n=8,281 | Base: GB adults | Data are weighted to be nationally representative | Fieldwork by YouGov, 23 Sep-25 Oct 2021
KEY INSIGHTS

• The British public think that small NGOs are more efficient, effective, honest and trustworthy, but the difference in assessments is larger for trust and honesty, which may be a more accessible heuristic or short-cut when taking decisions.

• Developing partnerships with the local community is important as is the capacity building and self-sufficiency generated by local partnerships. This is strongly driven by engagement levels, but even among the Marginally Engaged, more than 4 in 10 support local partnerships.

• Small NGO/charity boost for donations and petitions, but respondents prefer UK-based organisations that work in SSA, and WASH is the predominant issue to elicit support.
DATA AND USE

DATA
The data for this deck come from the DEL October 2021 Panel (base n= 8,281). Data are weighted to be nationally representative. Fieldwork conducted by YouGov, 23 September - 25 October 2021.

USE
DEL data and analysis are a public good and can be used and shared with the appropriate citation.

CITATION
The Development Engagement Lab (DEL) is a five-year study of public attitudes and engagement with global development in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States (2018-2023).

DEL is a partner focussed research programme, convening and co-producing research and insights with over 30 international development NGOs and government agencies to understand the drivers of engagement and inform development communications.

Fieldwork is carried out by YouGov and surveys are weighted to be a nationally representative of the adult population. DEL is a grantee of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and led by Professor Jennifer Hudson (University College London) and Professor David Hudson (University of Birmingham).

The **Development Engagement Lab** (Aid Attitudes Tracker Phase 2) has three goals:
1. Co-production of an evidence base for development campaigning
2. Enabling collaboration across the sector
3. Increasing advocacy capacity through the sharing of research and strategic insights

You can find out more information about DEL research at [www.developmentcompass.org](http://www.developmentcompass.org), follow us on Twitter [@DevEngageLab](http://twitter.com/DevEngageLab) or by contacting del@ucl.ac.uk

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