

Broader and Deeper:

The future of research on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in business schools.

Jem Bendell, April 20th 2008

Introduction

The past 15 years have witnessed an important change in the way many business people relate to the social and environmental performance of their companies. In the early 1990s there were few executives who would accept responsibility for the social and environmental impacts of their companies beyond legal compliance, or for the impacts of their suppliers or customers, or that those affected by their value chain should have some say over the social and environmental performance of that chain.¹ Today this has changed for many industries in many parts of the world. Thousands of companies now publish annual reports detailing their social and environmental contributions, and tens of thousands of firms have been certified as compliant with a range of independent voluntary standards.²

It is important to strive to understand how the social and environmental dimensions of business and finance are changing, and whether corporate social responsibility (CSR) will play a significant role in shaping global sustainable development in future decades. Insight on this question is of strategic importance for business, for NGOs, as well as governments and intergovernmental agencies. Despite this, there are few initiatives that seek to understand what the future of corporate responsibility will look like.

The purpose of this short paper is to provide interested persons in business schools, other research institutes, and those who fund them, with some insight into what the emerging knowledge needs are. This is in recognition of the important role of research and training in enabling professional practice. The paper was prepared at the request of the directorate of Griffith Business School, Australia, in a few days and with no budget, so it constitutes a personal and partial view, rather than a systematic overview.

The argument made here is that the future of research on the social and environmental dimensions of business and finance will be both broader and deeper. It will be geographically broader as the global shift in economic, political and eventually cultural power means that large emerging nations become important not only in terms of their domestic practices but their impacts around the world. It will be intellectually broader, as practitioners demand greater relevance to complex decision making on societal dimensions of business and interorganisational relations from research by universities. It will be organisationally deeper as integration of societal issues into all business functions, from marketing to accounting, becomes essential for risk management, innovation and competitiveness. It will be personally deeper, as more professionals will need to exist on the “bleeding edge” of innovation to drive forward organisational change, and to deal with ever greater complexity as business takes on more societal responsibilities.

Achieving a balance between the pull towards greater cross-disciplinarity and international relevance, on the one hand, and greater specificity in the application of CSR issues into core business functions on the other will be essential for academics and other researchers. A growing

1 For a history of these changes see Bendell, J. (2004) *Barricades and Boardrooms: A contemporary history of the corporate accountability movement*, UNRISD: Geneva.

2 Wayne Visser, Dirk Matten, Manfred Pohl, Nick Tolhurst (eds), 2007, *The A to Z of CSR: A Complete Reference Guide to Concepts, Codes and Organisations*. Wiley, UK

focus on discrete disciplines within academia due to government research assessments and a consequent distance between practitioners' priorities does not help University business schools achieve that balance. The growth in class sizes at many such schools also presents particular challenges for empowering students with the soft skills that are required due to the greater personal demands they will be called upon in future.

Therefore business school heads should consider what the future needs of society will be in 5 to 10 years, and plan for those, as government regulators and funders will likely follow these trends, as well as employers. It is also important, therefore, not to be influenced by current buzz terms and issues, and frame research and education in this space in ways that will be flexible enough to cope with a rapidly changing environment.

Future of CSR Research

BROADER
geographically & intellectually
DEEPER
organisationally & personally

How to assess the future of research?

A number of approaches can be taken to identify research trends and needs. These include assessing:

- how researchers and commentators have analysed the future of CSR practice and CSR research,
- an assessment of views of CSR practitioners and interested persons on future of CSR research,
- the insights from ones own general experience and research.

In doing this one can inquire into the following dimensions:

- Where: the geographical focus of research,
- What: the organisational (specific core functions like marketing, human resources, financial planning), and the societal (which social and environmental issues to focus on and questions about the overall impact, governance and beneficiaries of business and finance),
- Who: the different organisations that should do research,
- How: the methodology used during research and the processes for topic identification,
- Why: the objectives including publications, funding, course development, advisory services, public advocacy, and personal fulfilment,
- When: the urgency and prioritising of issues.

Researchers and commentators on the future of CSR Practice and Research

Most researchers conclude their publications with recommendations for future research, and that is particularly true on topics that have a normative aspect to them, such as CSR. A useful project would involve the compiling of recent research recommendations across the business sub-disciplines and other relevant disciplines such as sociology, political science, and development studies. That is beyond the scope of this paper. Even the most focused of literature reviews would require a scanning of around a dozen specialist journals, such as the *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, *Corporate Governance*, and *Business Strategy and Environment*, and a keyword search

of all business-related journals. Even reviewing the predictions and recommendations of publications that specifically mention CSR would require some weeks of staff time.

A brief review of some of academic papers on these topics suggests that many provide recommendations that are specific to their own research question, such as extending their study to further companies or countries. Therefore a systematic review might provide support for further studies that focus on developing recommendations for future interdisciplinary research that is relevant to stakeholders in CSR. Further work on this is required, which I return to below.

Without this information, the 2 other ways of identifying research needs and trends were pursued for this paper, and follow below.

Assessment of views of CSR practitioners and interested persons on future of CSR research

An internet search of CSR futures, and CSR research futures identifies a number of discussion documents, speeches and blogs from people involved in think tanks, NGOs, consulting firms and companies examining different aspects of these issues. From this search it appears that only three organisational initiatives in English, available publicly, have looked at the future of CSR in general. One was by Canadian intellectuals and practitioners in 2003³, another by the US based Business for Social Responsibility⁴, and the third by the company of this author, Lifeworth. The first two studies predicted the growing importance of two things in particular integrating and mainstreaming CSR. On the former, Allen White describes “what is emerging in the integration phase” as “multifaceted, comprising:

- Alignment with business objectives within overall company strategy
- Integration across business entities and functional areas
- Institutionalization by embedding strategies, policies, processes and systems into the fabric of the organization.”⁵

In addition, both reports described a growing realisation amongst leading practitioners that unless external drivers for corporate responsibility are enhanced, such as consumer and investor awareness, and regulatory support, then it will be difficult for individual companies to invest sufficiently to become fully socially responsible and environmentally sustainable or for the societal issues concerned to be adequately addressed. This led to the creation of Corporation 2020 which brings together business and other leaders to examine transforming the legal form of the corporation, amongst other systemic approaches to change. This parallels some predictions and recommendations in the annual reviews of corporate responsibility from Lifeworth, which are discussed below in the section on my own views. Neither of these initiatives have looked at the future of research on CSR, but inferences can be drawn: the emphasis on integration suggests more focus on how the different organisation functions can align with societal imperatives, and the importance of mainstreaming suggests more focus on how business communications functions can be put to encouraging action from media, consumers, investors, NGOs and regulators.

Debates have continued about whether CSR has a future or not, and whether its future suggests a completely new way of approaching business, rather than being an add on. For instance, some have argued that CSR has little future, as what consumers want, and what society needs as a whole, are authentically good products and services that arise from a responsible entrepreneurship. Harvard Business Review’s Conversation Starter blog posting by Joseph Pine and James Gilmore, authors of “Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want,” predicted that in 2008, “CSR will be seen for the sham that it is.” In the blog, the authors said that consumers are bound to increasingly seek out

3 <http://www.coopscanada.coop/newsletter/CSR/Winter2003/index.html>

4 http://www.jussempor.org/Resources/BSR_Allen-White.pdf

5 *ibid*

“enterprises that offer transformational change as the very substance of its offerings” and will “reject initiatives that merely front as the means to sell more wares.” An FT columnist replied that CSR is not about public relations but is now about integrating societal considerations into every stage of the business, and that large companies recognised the strategic need to be engaged in broader public policy issues to promote a sustainable economy.⁶ The latest book by John Elkington emphasises the growing importance of social entrepreneurs tackling societal challenges through commercial activities, and suggests that the implication for CSR is to better understand the psychology and approaches of social entrepreneurs to attempt to integrate their approaches into business innovation.⁷ That holds an implication for research – modelling the psychology and methods of successful social entrepreneurs.

Various models of strategic approaches to CSR have been proposed⁸, and the one that was developed by a practitioner of CSR, Dr. Simon Zadek is most relevant for the purposes of this paper as it also suggests an evolution towards mainstreaming as executives learn from their CSR activities. Zadek demonstrates this model with the example of the sportswear and apparel corporation Nike. He argues that companies move through a phase of ignoring and denying, to one of reputation management, which sees these matters in terms of costs and risks. Then companies move to a third stage, where engaging with stakeholders on social and environmental issues is regarded as a mechanism for innovating the business models of the future. A fourth stage involves executives recognising the limits to voluntary action, and engagement with other organisations, including governments and competitors, to influence the business environment so higher CSR performance is more financially viable.⁹ This model suggests innovation, inter-organisational relations and business communications functions become more important as CSR develops.

In terms of the regions of most importance, Jane Nelson¹⁰ at Harvard says that India and China need to get this right or other efforts are futile, and so more attention should move in that direction, which is also noted by Policy Advisor Eddie Rich¹¹ of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. In terms of what to focus on, some like Nike's Vice President of Corporate Responsibility, Hannah Jones, have indicated environmental issues will continue to become more central to the company's corporate responsibility strategy.¹² Others discuss the future in broader theoretical and governance terms, focusing on shifts in power between states and businesses, and predicting ever more voluntary adoption of a social role by international businesses¹³, and the growing role of multi-stakeholder initiatives as part of that¹⁴. Others have focused on specific functions, such as communications¹⁵, auditing or ethics¹⁶.

One initiative that could grow into a strategic foresight group on CSR is the informal gathering of

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- 6 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/7990a3ec-d8a9-11dc-8b22-0000779fd2ac,Authorised=false.html?_i_location=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ft.com%2Fcms%2Fs%2F0%2F7990a3ec-d8a9-11dc-8b22-0000779fd2ac.html&_i_referer=http%3A%2F%2Ftacticalphilanthropy.com%2F
 - 7 Elkington, J, P. Hartigan and K Schwab (2008) *The Power of Unreasonable People: How Social Entrepreneurs Create Markets that Change the World*, Harvard Business School Press, USA.
 - 8 Many of which appear to this author to be useful for academics seeking to package complexity, but not for practitioners or policy makers seeking to analyse or influence company performance. One example is Kai Hockerts and Thomas Dyllick 2002 "Beyond the Business Case for Corporate Sustainability", *Business Strategy and The Environment*, 11(2): 130-141, 2002.
 - 9 Zadek, S. (2004) 'The Path to Corporate Responsibility', *Harvard Business Review*, December 1, http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu/b02/en/common/item_detail.jhtml?id=R0412J
 - 10 Nelson, J. 2006, China and India will shape the future of CSR (13 March 2006), EDIE. http://www.edie.net/news/news_story.asp?id=11178&channel=0
 - 11 Rich, E. (2008) 10 Developments That EITI Will Face in 2008, <http://eitransparency.org/node/299>
 - 12 Jones, H (2007) Speech to Stanford University on the future of CSR, March 2007
 - 13 <http://www.eldis.org/go/display&id=20950&type=Document>
 - 14 Waddell, S. (2006) *Societal Learning and Change*, Greenleaf, Sheffield, UK.
 - 15 http://www.bitc.org.uk/resources/publications/future_of_cr_comms.html
 - 16 <http://www.globalchange.com/businessethics.htm>

“CSR Leaders” which first met in Geneva at the UN Global Compact in July, 2007. However, there are no public outputs from this group as yet, although informal consultations with members of that group by this author suggest the integration and mainstreaming agendas are considered most important.¹⁷

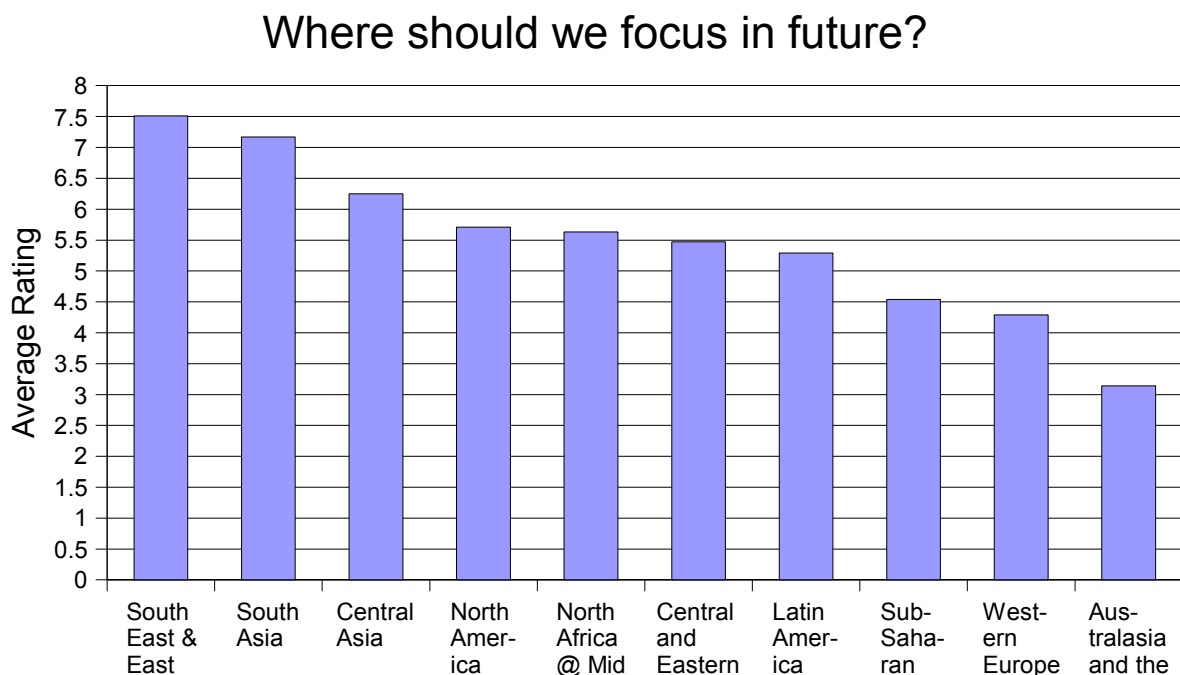
Other initiatives that could produce insight into future challenges, practice, and therefore policy, research and training needs, include the WBCSD 2050 Project on pathways to a sustainable global economy, and the new WWF One Planet Finance initiative (coconceived by this author), which will look at pathways to a sustainable global financial system. Neither are at a stage ready to report findings.

One can conclude that there has been little commentary by practitioners on who should research, how, the objectives, and priorities. Consequently, in preparing this paper, a short online survey was conducted of the 4000 subscribers of Lifeworth’s CSR bulletin. Respondents were given a week to respond to 10 questions. The questions and the raw data are included in appendix 1 and 2.

59 people completed the survey properly within that deadline. The majority (64.4%) are non-academic practitioners in CSR. Although over a third come from Western Europe, most regions of the world were represented by respondents. The response rate is low and the questions were generic, but the data produced provides an initial insight into the views of those who are engaged in CSR and willing to take time to consider related research needs.

Respondents consider that the most important regions for future CSR research are in Asia. Other regions with Emerging Nations were also ranked highly. Australia and the Pacific region was ranked last in importance for future research. However, it is close to and connected with the most important region South East and East Asia (Figure 1). This confirms the views noted above.

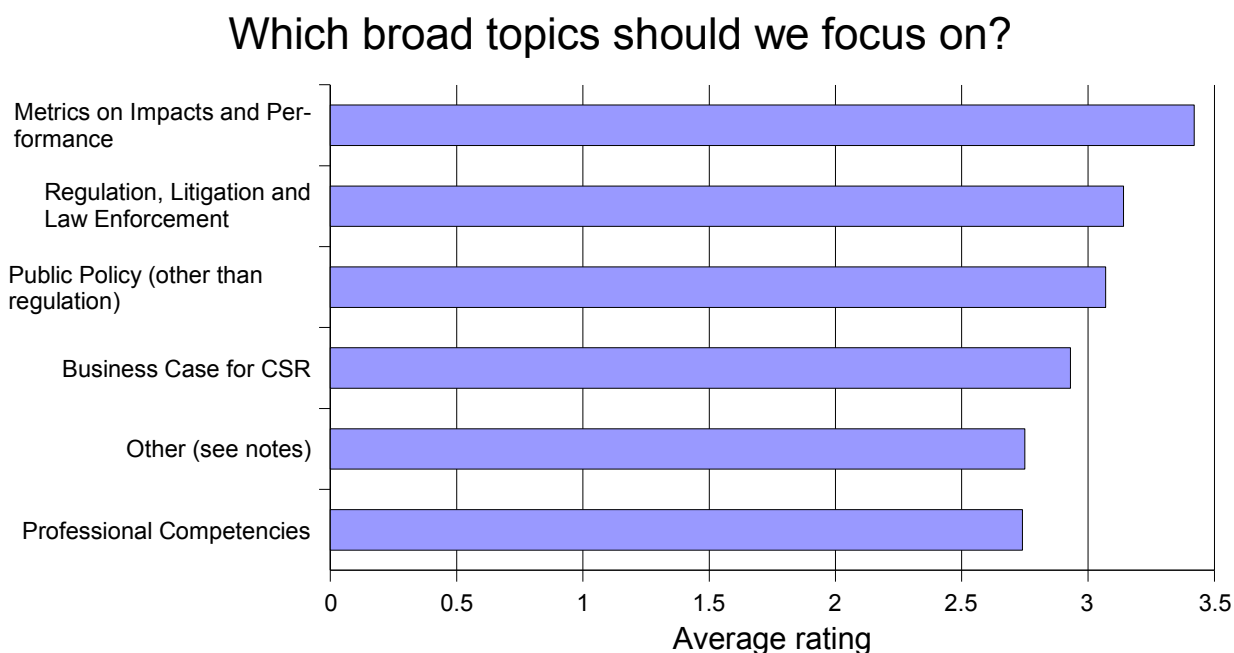
Figure 1. (n59)



¹⁷ The meeting included directors and other senior persons from the following organisations: AccountAbility, Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship, Sustainability, Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), Global Compact, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), Harvard Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative, Instituto Ethos, International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF), World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the World Economic Forum (WEF). Hosted by Instituto Ethos and the WBCSD.

The respondents were asked for opinions on broad areas for future research. The results are shown in Figure 2. Metrics on impacts and performance came top, along with studies on government action. These result to the mainstreaming agenda discussed above. Practitioners were less interested in research on development of professional competencies, in specific functions like marketing, human resources, financial planning and so on, which relates to the integration agenda. This might suggest they do not yet see the relevance of research to addressing organisational and professional development.

Figure 2 (n59)



Respondents want to see more research from universities on these topics. Practitioners most want business schools to do research (86%), ahead of development studies (74%) and public policy and law faculties, schools or departments (69%). All are considered more useful researchers than others groups, such as think tanks and NGOs.

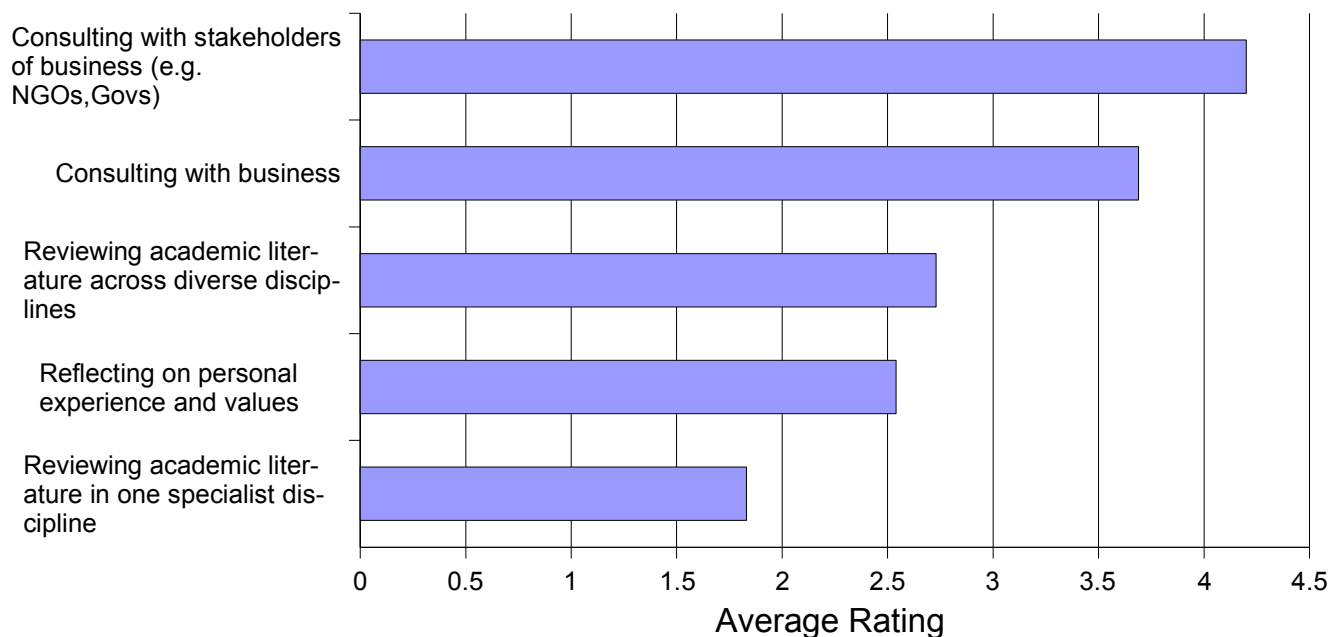
Due to time, this short survey did not inquire into practitioner views on methodology or on research priorities in terms of either issues or organisational functions. That can be examined in subsequent work. However, respondents were asked for what is important in the development of research topics, with the results displayed in Figure 3. They consider consulting with stakeholders to be most important, above consulting with business. They consider interdisciplinary review more important than single discipline approaches, which score even lower than the role of a researcher reflecting on their personal experience and values when shaping their research topics.

If university researchers seek relevance for their work, then the fact that only 61% of respondents have found an academic publication relevant to their work in the past 12 months, and just over half have consulted with an academic in that time means that greater effort is needed to make research relevant and digestible by practitioners.

Respondents were asked for information on which information sources that they consulted, as well as their own recommendations for future research. These will be coded and compiled in a later draft of this research note, and the raw data is provided in Appendix 2.

Figure 3 (n59)

Activities for Developing Research Topics



One's Own Insight from General Experience and Research

I have been working on and researching corporate responsibility issues for almost 13 years, with over 50 publications. I have provided informal or paid counsel to people involved in the inception of key CSR initiatives, including the UN Global Compact, Global Reporting Initiative, and Marine Stewardship Council, thereby taking a strategic view of institutional development in CSR.

During the past 7 years I have been writing a 5000 word column in the academic *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* every 3 months. This column focuses on trends in CSR practice, and to a lesser extent CSR research. Each year these have been compiled into annual reviews published by my company Lifeworth, with an overview focusing on what myself and my research associates consider to be the emerging trends as well as the needed actions to achieve greater positive change, as we understand it. In the last 3 years these reviews have taken this trends analysis to a greater level, making more predictions and recommendations.

- In the review of 2005 we argued that more CSR professionals were beginning to recognise the limits of voluntary corporate activity within existing market conditions and were looking to influence those market conditions to enable a stronger business case for actions they wanted to take for values-based reasons. Thus we predicated growing attention to the role of corporate communications, including lobbying, advocacy, marketing and investor relations.¹⁸
- In the review of 2006 we argued that some key cognitive frames about the role of business and financial institutions in society were shifting, in ways that would influence a wider range of practices. We also described the major shift in the frame of climate change, towards something current, economic, humanitarian and personally relevant. We suggested more work would be done on the framing of attitudes.¹⁹
- In the review of 2007 we argued that as the urgency of environmental and social challenges

18 Bendell, et al (2006) *Serving Systemic Transformations*, Lifeworth and Greenleaf.

19 Bendell, et al (2007) *Tipping Frames*, Lifeworth and Greenleaf.

was increasingly realised, as well as the need for absolute performance rather than only good intentions and continual improvement, so companies are increasingly setting targets for change. We put this in the context of sustainable consumption.²⁰

Although I have not conducted a detailed study of progress in these areas, each relates to the mainstreaming agenda for CSR described above, which has become more widely discussed today. The research implications are that interorganisational relations, including networks, alliances and partnerships, as well as marketing, lobbying and advocacy, are increasingly important, as well as analysis of how changes in institutions and governance occurs and how organisations relate to this. Consequently, social movements theory, institutional theory, and network theory become ever more relevant (if they help serve understanding of complex social realities, so we do not treat those realities as mere data for the demonstration of research competencies and self-serving publishing).

My own motivation for working in this field is connected to my understanding of how this field can evolve in the coming years. I presented this in 2004, when the UN published my “instant history” of what I described as a social movement on CSR and corporate accountability more generally (including anti corporate campaigners). In it I described the social and environmental need for a fundamental reworking of our global economic system, and how an unconscious exercise of corporate and financial power was a barrier to such change. I argued that the needed change to this global system, with the least suffering, could occur if our notion of what it is to be a professional person in business and finance shifted and so executives in these sectors became engaged in the change effort. This UN paper “Barricades and Boardrooms” concluded we would witness a coming together of those with a systemic critique of capitalism with those working within companies and financial institutions on CSR, in unusual and often informal coalitions and networks, that would push for more systemic changes in the way business and finance work. With the subsequent creation of the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI), corporate coalitions lobbying for climate change regulation, and initiatives looking at corporate law reform such as Corporation 2020, there are some signs of executives working for more systemic change. However, there is still much to be done, because the areas of that require further work are both highly technical, such as finance law, and highly political, requiring strong coalitions and constant attention to democratic accountability. My research in the past years has focused more on the latter of these two challenges.

Some of the predictions and recommendations for the future of CSR research that I have made in the 50 plus publications on these topics since 1996 are summarised in Box 2. One issue I make a recommendation on that I have not discussed yet is what to prioritise (“when to research,” in Box 2). I do not recommend a prioritisation of one social or environmental issue over another, due to their interconnectedness, and how social or environmental harm can come from pursuing action on one set of issues alone. The recent situation with biofuels illustrates how environmental sustainability issues can be addressed by business in ways that have negative social implications. A key issue facing the world is the food price rise, with the global price of rice increasing 74% in a year. This is partly linked to climate change impacts on agriculture, but also major shifts in economic activity and dietary habits in emerging economies, and a neglect of agriculture in the economic plans of some countries. A major compounding factor is the use of crops for biofuels, as oil prices rise and climate change responses grow. This illustrates how climate change can be addressed effectively in irresponsible or responsible ways. The impact of climate on agriculture also highlights how responses to the food price crisis must consider the climatic effects of responses, and thus seek less carbon-intensive farming and food distribution solutions. This also reminds us that although climate change is high on the current agenda, there are other important CSR challenges, relating to poverty, gender, disease, conflict, security, human rights and corruption, that all need some attention by the contemporary enterprise, particularly when operating internationally. The implications of this for the framing of work in this area by business schools is discussed below.

20 Bendell, et al (2008) *The Global Step Change*, Lifeworth and Greenleaf

Box 2: General CSR Research Recommendations Since 1996²¹

Where to research?

- Emerging economies, particularly those with growing foreign investment and trading power.

What to research?

- The financial services industry
- The management functions through which organisations influence society, and
- Political questions about the growth of private forms of governance and social provision
- Interorganisational conflicts and collaborations and they could enable wider, faster change
- Comparable measures of the social and environmental impact and contribution of enterprise

Who to research?

- Interdisciplinary departments and schools, such as development studies, regional studies, policy studies and business studies.

How to research?

- Questions derived from interactions with practitioners and stakeholders in business, with an explicit normative standpoint (and critical subjectivity), using a range of methodologies, including action research, and insights from multiple disciplines

Why to research?

- To enable beneficial social change either through the research process itself, or through its dissemination to students, practitioners or the general public.

When to research?

- Avoid the prioritisation of one social or environmental issue over another, due to their interconnectedness, and how social or environmental harm can come from pursuing action on one set of issues alone.

Challenges for Researchers

As this area develops further, academics face the dilemma of whether to develop greater specialisation for their own career, within existing business functions, such as marketing, accounting or human resources, and focus on research projects that primarily attend to existing theoretical debates and demonstrate methodological competence, or to be more interdisciplinary, applied and rapid in their research, although with robust methods, in order to be relevant for practitioners and policy debates. An effective career path may be a balance, to develop a niche without losing perspective. To do this will require the development of an approach to literatures in multiple disciplines that can cut through the detail relating to preoccupations of the different disciplines (and the review process) to identify what is relevant to a more interdisciplinary and applied approach. What will also be required for academics using this approach is a system for evaluating how well one is delivering on such an approach, and a system for disseminating results in ways that achieve impact as evaluated by various institutions of accreditation, rating and funding. I am aware of some attempts to address this within the “action research” community, such as guidance for the assessment of action research as well as the creation of new journals, but consider these too specialist and am interested to explore other new mechanisms when I become a full time academic.²²

Towards Responsible Enterprise

²¹ A review of all my publications to reference the ones where these issues are developed would be helpful if this document is developed for wider circulation. However, that is beyond the scope of the current draft.

²² For instance the *Journal of Action Research*, and assessment recommendations in *The Action Research Handbook* (Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

The term CSR is used in this paper due to its wide recognition and use both within practice and academe. However, the term is limiting in certain ways:

- First, it is still regarded by many people, particularly in Emerging Economies and in sectors that are new to these issues (such as luxury), as corporate philanthropy, not affecting core business
- Second, it is regarded by most practitioners as primarily about risk and not innovation and opportunity
- Third, many in civil society are critical of the public relations emphasis of much CSR practice.²³

For some, the paradigm of “sustainability” is seen to include the various social as well as environmental and economic dimensions of business. The concept of “sustainable development” is understood by the international community since the 1987 Brundtland Report and the 1992 Earth Summit, as concerning social and economic development.

However, for three reasons I do not believe that sustainability, nor even “sustainable development” will be a comprehensive framing for business people and researchers, going forward.

- First, people who are new to these issues think sustainability and sustainable development concern the environment alone. I was reminded of this when the Deputy Commissioner of the European Commission picked me up on a presentation at INSEAD in October 2007, saying we should not only focus on the environment and focus rather on sustainable *human* development (that after a talk about corporate responsibility for sustainable development as a whole!).
- Second, the way these issues are making headway in the financial sector, a key area for the future, is under the rubric of existing legal fiduciary responsibilities: the UNPRI being a key example. “Sustainability” is regarded by many practitioners in finance as a moral evocation and they prefer focusing on issues of fiduciary responsibility, and how various societal issues relate to that, including environmental ones. Hence responsibility is the preferred term.
- Third, in my research I have found that when environmental specialists work on social issues under the rubric of sustainability and sustainable development they can make major mistakes in misunderstanding core concepts of democracy, human rights, gender and accountability.²⁴ Thus it is important to recognise that certain issues are important in their own right, such as absence of child labour or sexual harassment in the workplace, whether or not they can be related to a concept of sustainability. Many people working on child labour, women's rights, corruption and conflict do not understand their work in terms of sustainability.

In the latest Annual Review I suggest “responsible enterprise” will become a useful term, as it emphasises both values and commerce (Box 3).

Box 3: Responsible Enterprise – a possible definition

23 I chose CSR for my network CSRGeneva.org purely for the fact it has the greatest immediate recognition, and our aim was to recruit participants.

24 Bendell, J., 2005, ‘In Whose Name? The Accountability of Corporate Social Responsibility’ in *Development in Practice*, Volume 15, Numbers 3 & 4, June, p362-374.

Responsible enterprise describes innovative commercial activity that actively seeks to do no harm to society and the environment, in some cases seeking to do good. It involves the presence of social, environmental, and economic considerations in the decision-making processes of business and finance. It involves not only diligent compliance with national law but also aspiring to meet the expectations of society, including relevant credible standards. It implies engaging those you impact or depend on to more effectively manage potential corporate risks, build trust within society, stimulate innovation, and enable new business models or reach new markets. For some it ultimately involves innovating products and business processes to provide solutions to social and environmental challenges.

Conclusion – Research Needs

There is a need to inform those who shape research agendas within business schools about what researchers and practitioners in CSR think should be researched in future, so they encourage researchers to conduct relevant work. These audiences include research funders, assessors, and publishers (including editorial boards). Consequently there is a need to identify, clarify, and synthesise the views of both researchers and practitioners on the future research agenda on CSR or responsible enterprise. At a minimum this needs to be done across all sub disciplines within business schools. It could also engage disciplines outside business schools, particularly international development studies, politics and law. The findings would need to be channelled to key opinion forming networks and institutions within the funding, assessment and publishing areas.