Our Social Impact Strategy
Making a difference in everything we do

At Pearson, our vision is to empower human progress through learning.

This dedication to creating positive social impact shapes every aspect of our business, from our products and strategies to the way we engage with our millions of learners around the world.

Making a positive difference and contributing to a better, more equitable world is an inextricable part of how we think, what we do, and who we are.

We’re in the business of learning and, as a company through our social impact work, we aim to support causes and issues that help remove the barriers to achieving better learning outcomes, with our primary focus on arguably the biggest barrier of all: illiteracy.

While literacy is at the heart of our flagship global campaign, Project Literacy, social impact at Pearson is about much more than a single issue or initiative. Through a combination of external and internal campaigns, sustainability, and social innovation, we’re dedicated to improving access to better education. Because more than anything, learning transforms lives, helping individuals to progress, communities to flourish, and economies to succeed.
The interconnectedness of social impact with our business and brand ensures that we’re doing good for society while simultaneously delivering on six key business outcomes:

1. Building a more stable operating environment
2. Driving growth and innovation
3. Improving access to and understanding of new markets
4. Motivating, engaging, and mobilizing our employees
5. Increasing cost savings and improving efficiencies
6. Enhancing our reputation and brand
1. Building a more stable operating environment

We embed sustainability and efficacy into our operations and focus on areas that demonstrate the connections between society, the economy, and the environment. Examples include our founding role in Project Everyone, promoting the world’s biggest development challenges and the advancement of the Global Goals for sustainable development, and our environmental commitments, which saw us become carbon neutral in 2009.

2. Driving growth and innovation

We focus on business model innovations that address critical social issues in tandem with the needs of our current and future customers. For example, through our Tomorrow’s Markets incubator, we act as a catalyst and support for employees’ product ideas aimed at low-income communities.
3. Improving access to and understanding of new markets

Through our partnerships, many of which are central to our campaigns and social innovation strategy, we are able to gain insight into and commercial advantage in new areas. Examples including exploring digital learning in Asia and Africa via Project Literacy and the Pearson Affordable Learning Fund (PALF) and bringing education to crisis environments via our partnership with Save the Children.

4. Motivating, engaging, and mobilizing our employees

Ours is a dynamic culture in which every employee is encouraged to volunteer, give, and share in support of a range of social impact issues. Examples of this include the Kiva micro-lending platform, match giving to advance the Global Goals for sustainable development, disaster relief, and the Challenge Fund, which supports employee-developed local literacy programs.
5. Increasing cost savings and improving efficiencies

Our social innovation, sustainability, and campaign activities drive systemic change by focusing on the intersection between social impact and our business. Our sustainability strategy centers on carefully managing our core business operations and value chain to minimize risks and proactively create business and social value.

6. Enhancing our reputation and brand

Through external campaigns, our partnerships with the private and public sectors, and our broader sustainability and social innovation strategies, we raise public awareness of social impact as a key differentiator for Pearson.

For example, our flagship Project Literacy campaign gives us a high-profile role in combating global illiteracy, and our participation in forums (such as the United Nations General Assembly week) that bring together leaders in the sustainable development community provide us with a platform to advocate for change and share our experience and commitments. And our partnership with America’s Promise enables us to work on a multi-state campaign to increase USA high school graduation rates, thereby increasing equal opportunities and employability.
Social impact group & goals

Setting the agenda

Pearson’s Social Impact team provides insights, tools, platforms, and expertise to ensure that sustainability (social, economic, and environmental impact) is fully embedded into Pearson’s global business operations and decision-making.

Through a focus on campaigns, social innovation, and sustainability, we aim to accomplish **three distinct goals:**

1. Get everyone involved
2. Think outside the box
3. Make it part of our DNA
1. Get everyone involved

We inspire, involve, and recruit many people and organizations into our initiatives—everyone from employees and customers to suppliers, stakeholders, and partners. For example:

- Our flagship campaign, Project Literacy, sees us partner with 15+ literacy and socially conscious organizations.
- Each year, our employees enjoy three volunteering days as well as opportunities to develop local programs via the Challenge Fund.
2. Think outside the box

We’re always looking for new ways to do business that will enhance our social impact and make learning more affordable, accessible, and effective for people who most need it. For example:

- Social innovation through the Pearson Affordable Learning Fund, which makes minority investments in ventures providing low-cost, high-quality education to marginalized communities.
- Collaborations with external partners to explore, pilot, and scale potential solutions, such as Every Child Learning with Save the Children, helping children caught in the Syrian refugee crisis access quality education, and the Literacy Accelerator with Unreasonable Institute to support rapid growth start-ups in tackling illiteracy.
- Full-scale business model innovation such as Pearson’s Tomorrow’s Markets incubator.
3. Make it part of our DNA

We’re determined to hardwire social impact into everything we do, ensuring that social impact is a key consideration in every decision taken at the corporate level. We seek to inspire other companies to do the same. For example:

• Building social impact and sustainability goals throughout our business.
• Working collaboratively across all parts of the business to ensure that meeting the social, economic, and environmental needs of our society also creates business value.
• Monitoring, measuring, and enhancing our social impact through the embedding of efficacy and sharing our literacy evaluation framework publicly with the literacy community.
Joining forces

As a business, we aim to lead the way in social impact and sustainable business practices; we see this as an opportunity to do good and differentiate our business.

Collaboration is key to accomplishing this, and we've built partnerships with leading non-profit organizations and socially aware companies. Combining our expertise with theirs, we develop innovative initiatives to generate powerful results and shared value. **Together with the 40,000 Pearson employees around the world, we make a formidable force for change.**
Toward a better future

At Pearson, we’re as much a social business as we are a learning business, and our dedication to creating positive social impact is right at the heart of our company.

We’re working toward a better, fairer future and a world in which everyone can learn—and be empowered to progress through learning.
ALWAYS LEARNING