

- SURVEY RESULTS MAX HAVELAAR LECTURE 2008 -

During the 2nd Max Havelaar lecture, a short survey was executed to discover the attitude of the audience towards partnerships and their effectiveness. 246 valid surveys were received. No major distinction appeared between male and female respondents.

SURVEY RESULTS N=246				
Question	Necessary	Sufficient	Necessary & Sufficient	None of the answers is correct
1. Partnerships are a condition for achieving the Millennium Development Goals	78,0%	5,3%	9,4%	7,3%
Question	Schoklandakkoorden of the government	Albert Heijn & Novib	Tesco & Forum of the Future	Shell & Friends of the earth
2. I am familiar with the following partnerships	38,8%	38,0%	13,4%	46,3%
Question	I agree	I disagree	Don't know	Total
3. Partnerships stimulate goal-alignment between the three actors; firms, government and civil society	85,7%	5,7%	8,6%	100%
4. Partnerships will blur the critical stands of NGO's towards firms	38,1%	41,5%	20,3%	100%
5. Firms mostly use partnerships as a PR tool	51,0%	28,0%	21,0%	100%
6. Firms mostly participate in partnerships because they want to contribute to global development	36,9%	37,3%	25,8%	100%
7. Governments and NGO's can become more effective in dealing with certain issues by engaging in partnerships with firms	93,0%	3,7%	3,3%	100%
8. Firms can make up for negative effects on local economies and markets by engaging in partnerships with NGO's	53,9%	32,0%	14,1%	100%
9. The financial crisis will strengthen the need for firms to engage in partnerships	51,2%	20,1%	28,7%	100%
9. I want the organisation I (will) work for, to participate in a partnership	76,5%	6,4%	17,1%	100%
Question	Positively changed	Negatively changed	Not changed	Total
10. This lecture has my attitude about the effectiveness of partnerships	38,3%	0,9%	60,8%	100%

Familiarity

The most interesting result of the survey is that 78% of the respondents believe that partnerships are a necessary condition for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The familiarity with actual partnerships, however, is not very impressive. On the contrary, almost half of the respondents for instance identified the 'partnership' of Shell & Friends of the Earth (FoE) as familiar. However, this 'partnership' was constructed by the survey designers, it does not exist! Friends of the Earth rather favours a planet without than one with Shell witnessing also the recent campaign of FoE against Shell. The familiarity of the audience with the Schoklandakkoorden (a major effort of the Dutch government together with many partners from business as well as civil society) is relatively low for an audience that is especially interested in partnerships. This finding therefore can be considered an area of attention for the Publicity campaign of the ministry and its partners.

A world to be gained

86% of the respondents believe that partnerships will stimulate goal alignment between firms, government and NGO's. The effect on the critical stance of NGOs towards firms is relatively unclear to the respondents: 38% thinks that partnerships will blur the critical stands of NGO's towards firms, whereas around 60% see no effect or don't know. There seems to be a major effort in credibility ahead for companies as well. Half of the respondents (51%) think that firms will mostly use partnerships as a PR tool, whereas around one-third (37%) consider the participation of firms in partnerships as a genuine effort to contribute to global development. So linking this finding with the



also stated necessity of partnerships for achieving development, we can see that there is still a world to be gained, partly because of misconceived expectations at participating parties in the partnerships. The necessity of partnerships with private parties is in any case underlined by 93% of the respondents believe that this will contribute to the effectiveness of governments and NGOs in dealing with certain issues. A slight majority (54%) thinks that partnerships with NGO's can help firms to make up for their negative effects on local economies and markets. This finding implies that firms cannot use partnerships as their sole effort to deal with indirect effects of their activities on local communities – as is sometimes suggested in the “Bottom of the Pyramid” discussion (see the position paper to this Max Havelaar lecture).

Dealing with the crisis and the future

51% of the respondents thinks that the financial crisis that started in October 2008, will strengthen the need for firms to engage in partnerships. In this sense partnerships should indeed move beyond a pure PR tool as assumed previously by 51% of the respondents. Two thirds of the respondents (77%) are supportive towards partnership participation of the organization they (will) work for. This is partly also further strengthened by the 2008 Max Havelaar lecture. The lecture has positively changed the attitude of 38% of the respondents regarding the effectiveness of partnerships. 61% state that their attitude has not changed, but their attitude – witnessing the other answers – was already quite positive before the lecture.

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