Business and MDGs - Controversial Debates over Corporate Social Responsibility

Jacylyn Yu Jun Shi 石玉君
Course Outline

The Role of Private Sector, the MDGs and Global Sustainable Development
– The controversies and prospects over how to make multinationals work for globalization

PROF. Y. J. SHI

Description

The 9-week module helps the students examine the multifaceted nature of contemporary globalization and social, political and economic faces of developments by focusing on the key actor – multinational corporations, each week examining one of the most debated issues surrounding the what role should/could business play in realizing the goal of sustainable development. Special attention will be paid to the changing role of private sector, in shaping the future of global governance, its interaction with governments, civil society and international organizations and the question of searching for the optimal coalition that works for MDGs and sustainable development. The underline theme of the topics illuminates the debate on the effectiveness and legitimacy of corporate social responsibility in reshaping corporate – development agenda.

Studying Methods

The course will mainly use case study, combined with multimedia presentation (documentary), class room discussion, students’ class presentation, and a final paper in the form of action plan of building business-led coalition on realizing one of MDGs, in particular poverty reduction.

Students will prepare a 10-mins presentation on a topic of interest related to the role of corporations in realizing MDGs, its interaction with other actors, followed with 10-mins class discussion. Students can raise debates or questions through the presentation, therefore the presentation will provide brief yet sound background information and preliminary analysis on the topic. The final paper can be based on the question discussed in the presentation, further examination of good practices or lessons leads to drawing implications to social policy or to international community towards future model of business-led coalition on realizing MDGs.
A one-page outline term paper proposal (for comments and advice) is required to be submitted on or before Week 8. Final term paper (suggested length: 3000 words, 12 fonts, double space, 12-13 pages) due within one week after last class. Early submissions are welcome.

Course Evaluation

Attendance  10%
Class participation  20%
Presentation  30%
Final Paper  40%

Course Material

Compulsory reading
  Will be provided at end of each class for the following week
The Role of Private Sector, the MDGs and Global Sustainable Development – The controversies and prospects over how to make multinationals work for globalization

Short title: Role of Businesses in realizing MDGs

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1  The increasing human face of globalization - MNEs and new development agenda: overview of the 3rd wave globalization, problems and challenges facing the world, and the debates surrounding globalization and multinational corporations – gather the positive synergy

Week 2  From philanthropy to new competitiveness paradigm – drivers and constraints to business social responsibility? Seeking answers from the history of corporation, corporatism, capitalism and today’s global market and new capitalism – from Nike, Shell, and Wal-Mart to responsible entrepreneurship, rural financing, and MDGs

Week 3  Reality check – role played by MNEs in sustainable development: case of poverty reduction; the controversies over Pharmaceutical MNEs and health care; case of business operation in conflict zones; lessons and questions: how to move from morality-driven to be business-driven?

Week 4  Private sector and public good supply, legitimacy and limit? What are the lessons from privatization, education, health care, public utility? The case of Bolivia water privatization

Week 5  Optimizing the development effect of FDIs, e.g. technology transfer, capacity building, and conflict between national policy and international commitments – can FDI work for development?

Week 6  Role of public sectors and intergovernmental organizations in making private sectors work for development; is private-public partnership effective? Debate over business-UN-NGO coalition – case of Global Compact

Week 7  From Washington Consensus to Beijing Consensus, emerging
multinationals from developing countries, new imperialism or new approach to international development – case of Chinese investment in Africa

Week 8  Beyond national level - business and the future of global governance, the question of ‘who owns corporations'? Is current International legal framework governing multinationals sufficient, or sufficiently facilitating businesses new task in development? what are the ongoing initiatives – what’s next?

Week 9  From promise to practice - exploring the untapped corporate capacity of contributing to MDGs – create enabling environment and positive agenda for the world: what are the recommendations and models?

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* List of compulsory readings on separate sheet
* Optional readings will be distributed weekly
* Office hour: Friday 4-5pm, Hammarskjold Room, GSD
* Email Prof Shi :  jacylyn@gmail.com