
**FAMILY BUSINESSES
ON A MISSION**

**ATTAINING
THE 2030
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOAL OF QUALITY
EDUCATION**

EDITED BY

**NAOMI | ROB
BIRDTHISTLE | HALES**

**Family Businesses on a Mission:
Attaining the 2030 Sustainable
Development Goal of Quality Education**

FAMILY BUSINESSES ON A MISSION



Series Editors:

Naomi Birdthistle

Rob Hales

The Family Businesses on Mission series examines how the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) can be applied in family businesses around the world, providing insights into cultural and societal differences and displaying innovative approaches to complex environmental and societal issues.

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Family Businesses on a Mission: Attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of Quality Education

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About the Editors

Associate Professor Naomi Birdthistle has entrepreneurship in her blood. She worked in her family business for over 20 years, which is the largest indoor funfair in Europe. On leaving the family business she ran her own consulting business, where she consulted family businesses on management issues. Naomi's passion for family business management and entrepreneurship is evident by her research outputs. She wrote the first ever PhD on family businesses in Ireland which won the Family Firm Institute's 'Best Doctoral Dissertation Award'. She has published 32 peer-reviewed papers, three books, 18 book chapters, 63 conference papers and an abundance of national and European reports. Naomi's research covers many areas within the entrepreneurship and family business discipline including the following: entrepreneurship education, minority groups and entrepreneurship; women owned and led businesses; succession planning in family businesses; divorce and family business and the role women play in family businesses. Naomi supervises PhDs around women entrepreneurship, family business management issues and high-growth firms.

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Dr Tafadzwa Leroy Machirori is an experienced researcher and lecturer whose interests lie in the field of entrepreneurship, in general, and more specifically, immigrant entrepreneurship, where he investigated for his doctoral thesis the experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs in high-tech sectors. More recently, he has begun delving into family business research and teaching. Previously, he has collaborated in several multi-disciplinary projects, including the evaluation of the status of teaching in Australia, university–SME collaboration in Australia, among others. In other research, he has also contributed to projects investigating substance abuse among young Victorians, sustainable youth livelihood initiatives and paths to alleviate youth poverty in Zimbabwe.

Mr Simon Meinschad is the CEO of hollu Systemhygiene GmbH, a Tyrolean-based company producing and distributing cleaning agents and supplies. Since 2018 hollu Systemhygiene has adopted the 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) into their daily business. Before becoming CEO of the company in 2012, Simon Meinschad worked at hollu Systemhygiene in controlling, sales, as well as other departments. Since 2019 he also functions as a board member and country coordinator (Tyrol) for respACT – the Austrian Business Council for Sustainable Development. In 2017 he held lectures at the University of Innsbruck (Austria), teaching Sales and Distribution Management. From 1994 to 2000 he worked for Hoepferger GmbH & Co. KG as an accountant. His career started with an apprenticeship as an industrial clerk at Liebherr-Werk Telfs GmbH.

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Foreword

Professor Walter Leal Filho

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 provide a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. They also entail elements of importance towards a strategic business engagement with sustainability issues. These offer a framework which provides businesses with a systematic approach to identify new business opportunities while contributing to the solution of the grand sustainability challenges facing the world today, including climate change. Each SDG, if achieved, will have a direct and significant positive impact on millions of people's lives around the world and the environment in which they live.

Businesses have an opportunity to widen the purpose of business through adopting the SDGs as targets for their operations. Thus, they can make a meaningful contribution to the greater good through achieving their operational objectives.

Family businesses are uniquely placed to contribute to SDGs for many reasons. First, because family business models have longer time perspectives, and this allows the family business to link with the longer-term SDG time frame – 2030. Second, family businesses often focus on aspects of business operation which do not have an immediate return on investment such as relationship building with stakeholder groups. Third, family businesses tend to rate the importance of ethics higher than standard businesses and thus align well with the social dimensions of the SDGs. Lastly, family businesses have intergenerational perspectives which is a core principle of sustainability.

This book provides insights into how family business operationalises SDG#4: Quality Education. The book uses a rigorous case study approach for family businesses to detail aspects of their business which help to advance quality education. The cases provided here are living proof that family businesses that operate for the greater good actually work! Non-family businesses can take a leaf out of the family businesses portrayed in this book as they can provide different perspectives on how businesses can successfully align SDGs and business strategy.

Despite many businesses having adopted environmental social governance strategies and environmental management systems, the effect of this activity has not been reflected in a healthier planet. Many 'state of the environment' reports indicate that planetary health is decreasing and planetary boundaries are being

crossed or are about to be crossed. Whilst the cause of this decline is not entirely the fault of a business, there still needs to be a greater effort to address the decline. The challenge for family businesses is to use their unique characteristics and set ambitious programmes of work that make a meaningful contribution to achieving global goals. This book provides insights into how family businesses can achieve such a mission and how non-family businesses can be inspired to do the same.

Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank the contributors of the book for providing insights and sharing the learnings from their business practice. We acknowledge that writing up cases in the format required considerable time and effort. The quality of the cases presented is a testament to their efforts.

The editors would also like to thank Emerald Publishing for supporting the publication of this book and the mission for deeper sustainability through utilising the SDGs.

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Chapter 1

The Sustainable Development Goals – SDG#4 Quality Education

Rob Hales and Naomi Birdthistle

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all member states of the United Nations in 2015, is a shared blueprint for people and the planet, with the aim to achieve peace and prosperity for all. Within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a call to action for all countries to address ‘the global challenges of poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice’. These challenges are identified by 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as depicted in Fig. 1, and within the SDGs are a total of 169 targets. These 17 SDGs acknowledge that ending poverty and other global challenges need strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests (United Nations, 2021). The global pandemic of COVID-19 has presented challenges to those working towards achieving the



Fig. 1. 17 Sustainable Development Goals. *Source:* United Nations, n.d.¹

goals. The social and economic impacts of COVID-19 are predicted to increase the divide between people living in rich and poor countries (UNEP, 2020). However, if there can be concerted action using the blueprint of the SDGs, then human development can exceed pre-COVID-19 development trajectories (UNEP, 2021). What is needed is a combination of political commitment from all levels of government, investment in green economy initiatives, socially oriented innovation and a (re)focus on the purpose of business to align with the SDGs.

This book focuses on SDG number 4 (SDG#4) which focuses on ‘Quality Education’. It is recognised globally that having access to education can be a means by which to get people out of poverty and provide them with a means of socioeconomic mobility (United Nations, n.d.). This SDG has been severely impacted by COVID-19 as schools were closed and nearly 1.6 billion children and youth did not get access to schooling (United Nations, n.d.). Going to school is often the one place that children and youth get a stable meal and due to COVID-19, nearly 369 million children were also denied this source of nutrition. When designing the SDGs, each SDG was given targets and indicators. For SDG#4 there are 10 targets to achieve, and each of these targets has its own set of indicators which is used to measure progress towards reaching the target. Within the 10 targets of SDG#4, there are seven outcome targets, which are circumstances to be attained and are identified as Target 4.1 through to Target 4.7 and three ‘means of implementation targets’, which are labelled as Target 4.a; Target 4.b; and Target 4.c. The three ‘means of implementation’ targets were developed post the development of the outcome targets and were designed to address the concerns of some Member States about how to achieve the SDGs. All SDG#4 targets are to be achieved by the 2030 timeline that has been set (United Nations, n.d.). Fig. 2 highlights the targets contained within SDG#4.

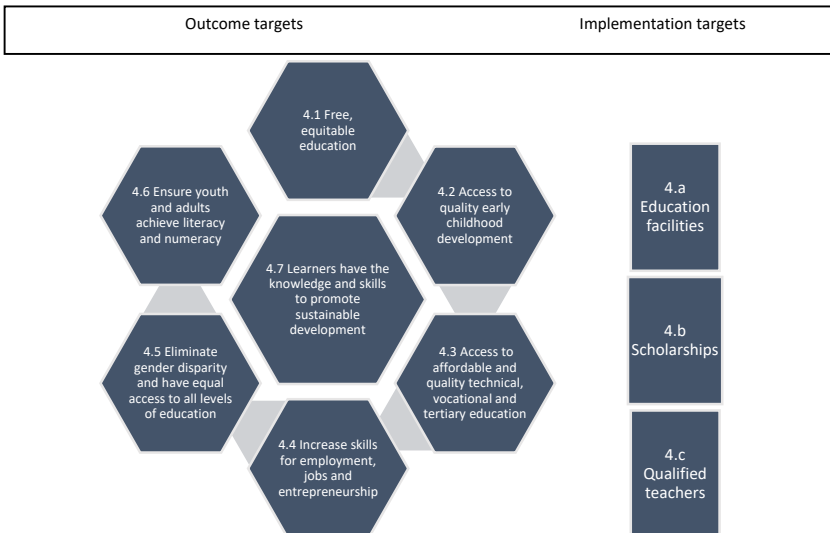


Fig. 2. Targets Within SDG#4.

The first outcome target – Target 4.1 – has been designed to ensure that both girls and boys have access to quality primary and secondary education that is both free and equitable. Target 4.2 aligns itself with the early childhood development stage and has been designed to ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality childhood development, care and pre-primary school education. This would enable them to be ready to engage in primary education. *SDG#4* also applies to ensuring access for all women and men to quality education and Target 4.3 relates to ensuring they have access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university level. Target 4.4 has the aim of considerably increasing the skills set (including technical and vocational skills) of the youth and adults that would then lead to opportunities for employment, decent jobs and opportunities to be self-employed through entrepreneurship. Target 4.5 has the goal of abolishing gender inequalities in education and ensuring that all levels of education and vocational training is accessible to those who are vulnerable such as people with disabilities, children in vulnerable circumstances and Indigenous people. Target 4.6 means to guarantee that all youth and a considerable proportion of both men and women of adult age achieve literacy and numeracy. Target 4.7 aims to make certain that youth and adults have the knowledge and skills that would enable the promotion of sustainable development. This includes providing education for and about: sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles; human rights; gender equality; campaigning for a culture of peace and non-violence; and global citizenship along with an appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

For the means of implementation targets found within *SDG#4*, the first target – Target 4.a – relates to the learning environment and aims to ensure that there are facilities that are built and/or upgraded that are suitable for children with disabilities, the facilities are gender sensitive and safe and they provide a non-violent and inclusive learning environment for all children. Target 4.b has been designed to address the assurance of the global availability of scholarships which are available to developing countries; with a particular focus on least developed countries (i.e. small island states and African countries). These scholarships would enable the enrolment into higher education institutions, including vocational training. Target 4.b also focuses on the enrolment in information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes in least developed and developing countries. Lastly, by 2030, Target 4.c focuses on developing teachers with the minimum required qualifications through international cooperation for teacher training in least developed countries, small island developing states and in developing countries.

As previously mentioned, this book focuses solely on *SDG#4: Quality Education*. *SDG#4* aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and this book provides insights into how businesses take action on the *SDG* through the work of their business. Family businesses play an important role in achieving this. Businesses that have education at the core of their business model have promoted education for sustainable development, contribute to building a skilled workforce, build capacity in

people and communities, create jobs through their business and finally focus on inclusion to provide wider opportunities. Much research has been directed towards family businesses, but little attention has been directed to how a family business can advance sustainability and social impact using SDGs. This book provides case studies of family businesses that advance SDG#4 through their work.

Furthermore, the SDGs are a call to action, to develop innovative solutions to some of the world's most complex, societal, and environmental challenges. Businesses play a crucial role in forging this path and since family businesses account for more than two-thirds of businesses worldwide and contribute to 70–90% of the world's GDP, we believe it is important to showcase the role they play in facilitating the achievement of these SDGs. Furthermore, a key feature of this book is highlighting the role of gender diversity in achieving a better, sustainable world. Thus, we incorporate throughout the series certain notions and examples of how women in family firms influence specific, well-grounded efforts to enhance the world we live in. By including examples of women who champion SDGs within their family business it will provide readers with examples of role models.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many family businesses have shown to be more resilient and operate more sustainably than standard businesses (such as the shareholder approach). The reason for this lies in family businesses generally taking a long-term perspective on stakeholder relationships and the real need for long-term continuity planning to sustain the people within their businesses. The people in their business are most likely to be family members. However, like all businesses, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed financial pressures on family businesses. One needs to ask the question: *How then can family businesses extend their capacity to operate more sustainably and with more social impact during times of business stress?* Well, family businesses can offer unique insights into how sustainability and social impact can be part of the regenerative response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The idea for the book came from two observations. The first observation was that family businesses that had sustainability at their core were performing well despite the impacts of the pandemic. The second observation was that the SDGs were being used as a framework for regeneration after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

SDG#4 Book Series Focus

The chapters in this book focus on businesses that have education as a key component of their business model. The first case examines the family business of the '4th Street Market' which is in Santa Ana, California. It is an excellent example of the complexities of urban regeneration and its relationship to widening participation in education. The 4th Street Market is a retail space for artists and food stalls. The educational dimensions of the market are found in the 'public realm change process' which is about creating space for local art works and the preservation of historic sites. The family business encourages and supports retail owners to develop education programmes linked to their services and

products. There is also a focus on youth and education. The family business, through the markets, supports local youth employment, increasing educational levels to post-high school qualifications, and redefines the area to be attractive for younger families. The entire 4th Street Market area is directed towards this goal of retention and attraction of the under 25 age group.

The next case is the case of 'Likoul', which is a social enterprise which was developed as a tutoring platform for primary, middle and high school students in Algeria. Likoul has brought several disciplines together: teachers for pedagogy, computer scientists, computer graphics and audio-visuals to develop the product. Likoul has a focus on SDG#4 by making tutoring more accessible to all parts of Algeria and ensuring the programme is affordable for a diverse range of families. In doing so, Likoul wanted to help reduce the influence of social inequalities on education. Its ultimate goal was to ensure a better education for all Algerian students, to facilitate their success, and, in so doing, to reduce the high school dropout rates. The ambition of Likoul was to allow millions of school children from disadvantaged backgrounds to have access to quality tutoring at almost no cost to promote quality education for all. The business employed 30 people over more than three years, and this initiative has demonstrated that the country has the human capacity to provide a technological solution to a significant social problem. It has faced challenges in implementing its mission to fill the huge education gap in Algeria. However, it has become quite notable in its novel approach and considerable reach into the communities of Algeria. This is an interesting case as there are external factors that affect the success of the business. Socio-economic instability has forced the business to pause but plans to develop the platform have been made for when conditions improve again in the future.

The penultimate case examines the family business of Julius Holluschek who founded a family business called 'Hollu System Hygiene' in 1905. The fourth-generation business has now implemented a strategy of advancing the 17 SDGs in every part of their company. Their aim was not only to change their own business but also to inspire other companies too, to jump on the 'band wagon' of sustainability. There is a strong education focus internally within the business. Every single employee has a personal and professional goal supported with a training programme that includes the SDGs. The programme is called the 'Hollu Academy', which supports through various courses its employees in their growth; additionally, the academy is also accessible for external participants, who want to increase their knowledge about certain practices. External education is also a feature. The business created an environment of transparency and trust among the family firm so that their business practices could be showcased to the external world.

The final case in this book series explores the McPherson family and the Invergowrie Foundation. The McPherson family business originally was a hardware and machinery business which was established in 1860. Whilst the contribution of the business to SDG#4 is not explicitly documented in the business, the family has made a significant contribution to SDG#4 through their charity work. The Invergowrie Foundation is a charity which was created by the large financial gift of the McPherson family in 1993. The primary focus of the

Invergowrie Foundation is to advance the education of girls and women within Victoria. The Invergowrie Foundation awards grants that make a significant impact enabling access, promoting excellence, advancing leadership and supporting research. The charity has a long history as the McPherson family also gifted a hostel that was used for training of young women. The family was involved in the Homecraft Hostel which was established in 1929 in conjunction with the Association of Headmistresses of Independent Schools of Victoria (now the Association of Independent Girls Schools of Victoria). Although this education may seem dated from contemporary social perspectives, it demonstrates the long-standing commitment of education for young women for almost 100 years. More recently the family is involved with initiatives through the Invergowrie Foundation Grants Committee. Since 1997, the Invergowrie Foundation has focussed on scholarships for young female students in Australia. The McPherson family continues to be represented on the foundation board of trustees to continue the long tradition of assisting young women.

Methodological Approach Adopted for the Book

The book used a case study method to gain insights into the practices of businesses using the SDGs. The summary outline of the case study template is shown in [Table 1](#). The Editors approached a range of potential authors to develop the case studies. They approached early career researchers, PhD students, family business academics, family business consultants, managers of family businesses centres and family business practitioners to consider submitting a case for the book. For interested authors, they were asked to choose the SDGs that best matched the family business of their choice and use a case study template provided by the Editors of the book series to craft a case study on how the family business advanced the particular SDG. A truly global response was received for the book series with participants from all over the globe.

Table 1. Key Aspects of the Case Study Template Used by Authors in This Book.

<i>Vision and mission, services offered by the organisation Background to the company Historical development</i>	<i>How do the vision mission and background of the organisation relate to the particular SDG?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founding date • Founder details • Human interest angle of founder • Quotes from the founder or key people • Size of organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did the SDG become important to the organisation? • Was there a person who championed the SDG? • Is the SDGs explicitly talked about by staff?

Table 1. (Continued)

<p><i>How do key stakeholders relate to the SDG championed by the organisation?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stakeholders influence the organisation? • Has the adoption of the SDG in the organisation had an impact on stakeholders? • Have stakeholders influenced the actions of the organisation related to the SDG? 	<p><i>Outline the business model of organisation and add how SDG is important.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline key elements • Outline structure of organisation is needed. • Provide a diagram of business model • Identify key activities and return on investment • How does the SDG relate to return on investment?
<p><i>What are the challenges facing the organisation in implementing the SDGs?</i></p>	<p><i>How does the organisation see itself in relation to providing benefits outside the organisation? What next for the organisation?</i></p>

Contribution of the Book

This book makes an important contribution to research on family business by highlighting how businesses promote particular SDGs through their work. There are several streams of research emerging in the literature on family business and sustainability that are relevant to this book. [Ferreira, Fernandes, Schiavone, and Mahto \(2021\)](#) identify four streams of research in family business and sustainability: family business capital, family business strategy, family business social responsibility and family business succession. The case study approach of this book provides insights into how SDGs can be used to advance the family business's sustainability strategy and social responsibility. How a family's trans-generational sustainability intentions positively influence the strategy of the business and the family's concern for its reputation has been identified as a driver of sustainability in family businesses. Additionally, family businesses routinely combine innovation and tradition to achieve and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage.

Additionally, the book series aims to contribute towards positively portraying the role of family businesses and/or women in family businesses, in effectively achieving SDGs on a global basis. The case studies of family businesses contained within this book display supports and embodies the principles of an SDG in their operations, culture and/or business philosophy.

Identifying the Readership

This book is one of 17 vignette books series in which each book will be composed of a set of short, easy-to-read family business cases related to the unique SDG

being discussed in the book. The format of the book series allows the works to be accessible to those working in the field beyond academia such as family business practitioners, family business owners, family business advisors, government and business policymakers, members of NGOs, business associations and philanthropic centres, as well as to those who have a general interest in entrepreneurship and business. This book will be useful for those wanting to know how businesses use SDGs to make an impact in the world and incorporate this with a deepening of strategic commitment to sustainability. Despite SDGs now being recognised as an important framework for aligning business to build back better from the pandemic there are very few businesses that used SDGs for developing deeper strategic approaches to sustainability. Most of the large business that have been identified in surveys (Harvard Business Review, 2019) had simply relabelled their existing corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and did not do anything new or different from advancing the goals.

This book will be useful for small businesses, groups such as chambers of commerce, consulting organisations and sustainability accreditation bodies who want practical examples of how the SDG business model can deepen sustainability operations. At the time of writing there is still eight years left before the SDGs need to be achieved. Education about how to achieve the goals is critical during this time period. The book will have practical use for teaching and learning in universities, technical institutions and high schools.

Note

1. The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.

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