



The Conference Board operates with a dual mission: to equip the world's leading corporations with the practical knowledge they need to improve their performance and better serve society. Our founders believed the first obligation of an enterprise is to build and sustain a successful business that, in turn, creates employment and stimulates economic development. Today, our members also seek to contribute value to their communities in more specific and direct ways.

As part of our societal mission, we make public a portion of our research at no charge so that a broader audience can benefit from our work. For our members, we offer a rich portfolio of activities focused on societal objectives such as sustainability and education.

Funding for these activities comes from our 1,032 member organizations. Because of their support, we feel an obligation to report on our societal activities, both to make our members and the broader business community aware of our efforts and to hold ourselves accountable for delivering services that are valued. This publication covers the activities that we believe provided a societal benefit in 2014.

In FY2014, The Conference Board invested US\$6.6 million in societal initiatives. These investments supported a wide range of products, from our economic indicators—which are influential in public policy circles worldwide—to our portfolio of reports, meetings, webcasts, and councils devoted to helping top companies meet their social obligations.

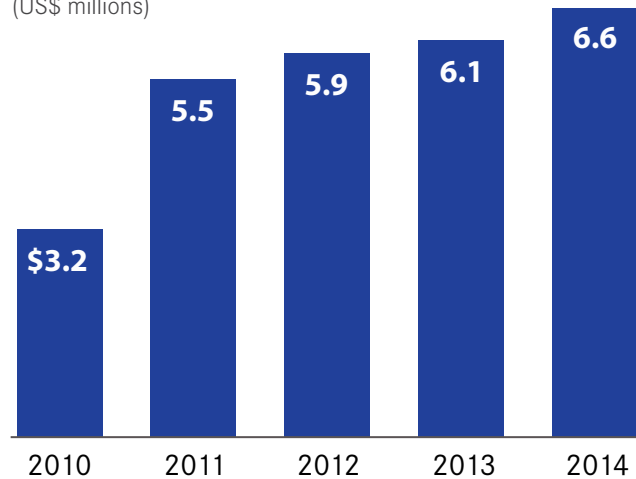


Our investment in societal programs has more than doubled over the past four years, reflecting both increased efforts at The Conference Board and the greater interest of corporations and citizens in addressing the world's pressing challenges.

This report summarizes our work as thought leaders for member organizations and the broader business community in several important areas, including sustainability, corporate philanthropy, peer learning and research in social investments, diversity and inclusion, and employees with disabilities.

The Conference Board Investment in Societal Initiatives

(US\$ millions)



Note: The years represented are fiscal years, which last from July 1 to June 30, and not calendar years.



SUSTAINABILITY

In 2014, The Conference Board released *Sustainability Matters 2014: How Sustainability Can Enhance Corporate Reputation*, a collection of reports that explores the increasingly important link between sustainability, brand, and reputation, and offers guidance on how to create long-term brand value with sustainability initiatives. This report was complemented by a series of interactive webcasts featuring discussions led by the authors who represented several leading institutions, including Harvard Business School, Stellenbosch University Business School, Northwestern University, Oxford University, and Copenhagen University.

2014 also saw the release of six *Director Notes* specifically addressing corporate sustainability topics. These complimentary publications addressed a number of issues at the intersection of sustainability and risk, including “Managing Supply Chain Sustainability and Risk,” “Developing an Effective Climate Change Strategy,” and “How Do Financial Markets Respond to Corporate Sustainability Disclosure?”

The *Director Notes* series also explored sustainability challenges and opportunities faced by companies in emerging markets. Specifically, one of these reports looked at the evolution of a corporate social responsibility (CSR) regime in India, with a focus on new guidelines and regulations affecting companies doing business in India. A separate report reviewed corporate sustainability disclosure in Brazil, offering an overview of the state of environmental and social practices among companies in the country.

We also released our annual report analyzing data from the most recent proxy voting season, *Proxy Voting Analytics*. The report reviews data from more than 2,500 annual general meetings and includes analysis and commentary on the environmental and social proposals submitted by shareholders to companies in the Russell 3000

index during the first half of 2014. The full report was supplemented by a *Director Notes* issue—available to the public—examining the most significant environmental and social topics of the proxy season.

In 2014, we released a number of publicly available “Charts of the Week” featuring data and analysis from *Sustainability Practices*, our sustainability disclosure benchmarking report. These charts illustrate the state of corporate disclosure across a number of sustainability practices, including diversity (e.g. the percentage of women in management positions), health and safety (e.g. the number of workforce accidents), energy (e.g. renewable energy usage), and labor practices (e.g. anti-bribery policies).

In addition to the release of research publications, in 2014 we held the *Summit on Sustainability* in New York City, where senior executives discussed key topics, including financial drivers for sustainability, the impact of the water-energy nexus, and recent sustainability innovation and technology trends. These and other topics were also discussed at the meetings of our various councils related to sustainability, including Sustainability Council I, Sustainability Council II, EH&S Officers Council, and the European Council on Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability.

Last year also marked the launch of The Conference Board Research Working Group, *Integrating Sustainability into Your Core Businesses*. This Research Working Group convened sustainability executives from leading companies to explore key sustainability issues facing companies in depth, including how best to identify challenges and opportunities related to sustainability and how to develop strategies that can create business value, drive engagement among stakeholders, and improve competitiveness versus peers.



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

INITIATIVE ON CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY

The Conference Board Initiative on Corporate Philanthropy addresses the need of corporate members for knowledge and peer learning experience in the field. Our mission is to assist the business community in integrating philanthropy, citizenship, and sustainability into a cohesive value-growth strategy in which the company fully leverages its relations with a wide array of stakeholders.

Several of our councils focus on corporate philanthropy, including the Global Social Investing Council and Contributions Councils I and II. These councils convened several times in 2014 and discussed issues such as the intersection of philanthropy, diversity, and inclusion. We also held the first international meeting of the Global Social Investing Council in China.

FOCUS ON SOCIAL IMPACT MEASUREMENT

Today, measuring corporate philanthropy means evaluating the performance of programs supported rather than counting the dollars donated. What frameworks are most effective in measuring the performance of charitable contributions? How do companies determine whether the nonprofits they support are really making a difference, or whether their dollars would have more social impact elsewhere? In 2014, The Conference Board's research focused on these important questions and others.

Our *Giving Thoughts* series, authored by leading corporate philanthropy experts, published six articles analyzing the practice of social impact measurement, while our *Giving Thoughts* blog examined the opportunities and challenges of utilizing data to measure impact. We also produced a major report, *Framing Social Impact Measurement*, along with complementary webcasts and business implication reports, and hosted a City Briefing for members.

For the first time, *Giving in Numbers: 2014 Edition* compiled and published benchmark information on social impact measurement, providing companies with important data on their peers' impact measurement efforts. This report was published by the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy in association with The Conference Board—our fourth year of collaboration. We held a webcast to discuss these findings, among others, which included the growth in giving since the end of the recession and the rise of community-focused employee engagement.

In 2014, we also launched the Communicating Your Social Impact Research Working Group. Effective communication of social programs is more important than ever, as stakeholders—customers, regulators, shareholders, and employees—have increasingly high expectations for the behaviors of corporations and want access to information about multinational corporations' social policies and impacts. Communications and corporate citizenship professionals are challenged with how best to publicize positive aspects and serious social engagements to a skeptical audience, while being authentic as opposed to PR driven.

ADDITIONAL CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY WORK

In addition to social impact measurement, we continued to work on other important corporate philanthropy issues. Through The Conference Board China Center for Economics and Business, we collaborated with 11 other research efforts on a three-year Initiative on Philanthropy in China, a project funded by the Henry Luce Foundation and the Ford Foundation and jointly carried out by the Indiana University Research Center for Chinese Politics & Business and the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. We looked at international corporate engagement in the development of China's philanthropic sector. Specifically, the China Center studied the basis upon which US corporate foundations identify grantee organizations or areas of funding in China and the impact of current corporate funding patterns on the Chinese nonprofit sector.



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

In 2014, The Conference Board published several important reports in the area of diversity and inclusion (D&I), including: *The Conference Board Human Capital in Review: Focus on Diversity & Inclusion* and *Second Acts in Prime Time: Helping Employees Transition to Post-retirement Careers*. In early 2015, we will publish a comprehensive report on the evolution of diversity and inclusion.

The Conference Board Human Capital in Review: Focus on Diversity & Inclusion examined hot topics within diversity and inclusion research. The report features summaries of current literature focusing on the impact of diversity on innovation, effects of cultural diversity on team dynamics and group productivity, gender equality around the world, the best companies for LGBT employees, gender diversity on boards, and executive presence for multicultural professionals.

In partnership with Encore.org, The Conference Board published *Second Acts in Prime Time: Helping Employees Transition to Post-retirement Careers*. Over the next 20 years, baby boomers will retire from corporate America with skills, expertise, and many productive years ahead. Our research shows how innovative firms are rethinking their retirement models to retain talent and engage employees as they transition

to “second act” careers. In addition to this publication, we held several related webcasts. A book discussion on the *Encore Career Handbook* helped guide participants through every step of the journey to a second career, from planning and effective networking to finding roles where age and experience are assets. The webcast *Supporting Transition to Post-Retirement Careers* provided a broad overview of the second act career trend. Participants learned how companies can support the transition of retirees to full- or part-time work through paid fellowships and other programs.

In 2015, we will explore the current state of D&I and identify emerging trends and innovative next practices. A forthcoming report, *The Evolution of D&I Management: Current Trends in an Era of Globalization*, will highlight the results of interviews with over 30 D&I practitioners and thought leaders. The report also examines the evolution of the D&I field, providing historical context. The accompanying webcast, *Human Capital Watch: The Evolution of D&I: From Compliance to Culture and Beyond*, features key findings from interviews conducted with Chief Diversity Officers and how current and future trends will influence the future of D&I.



EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

What are employers doing to improve employment for people with disabilities and build disability-inclusive cultures in the workplace? In 2014, The Conference Board partnered with several organizations to address this important question. Researchers on our human capital team collaborated on several research initiatives with the National Technical Assistance, Policy, and Research Center for Employers on the Employment of People with Disabilities (NETAC), led by the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations Employment and Disability Institute and funded by the US Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

In 2014, we published *Tapping Hidden Talent Pools: Recruiting, Developing, and Retaining Veterans and People with Disabilities* to provide an in-depth explanation of the new federal regulations from the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) on employing veterans and people with disabilities. The report highlights business practices from six major companies that have actively worked to improve disability and veteran employment programs.

The Conference Board addressed the implications of new federal regulations for employers through research and webcast discussions. A forthcoming report—*Do Ask, Do Tell: Encouraging Employees with Disabilities to Self-Identify*—investigates what companies are doing to foster disability-inclusive cultures and encourage employees with disabilities to voluntarily self-identify. The research project includes a webcast discussion on key findings with nearly 500 HR, D&I, and EEO/AA compliance professionals participating.

We also hosted several webcasts with partner organizations NETAC and the National Organization of Disability (NOD) to bring attention to attracting, developing, and retaining people with disabilities. These webcasts included: *New OFCCP Regulations on Employing People with Disabilities*; *Opening the Doors of Small Business to People with Disabilities*; *From Application to Onboarding: Accommodations Make a Difference*; and *Post-Placement Workplace Support for Wounded Warriors*.



ECONOMIC RESEARCH

In 2014, a portion of The Conference Board's societal investments supported our economic research. Each year, we make a significant investment to provide economic indicators for the world's major economies. The Conference Board's global leading economic indicators cover 12 countries and the Euro Area which represent more than two-thirds of global GDP.

The Conference Board also produces several barometers of consumer and business confidence, including the widely quoted Consumer Confidence Index. Our Chief

Economist and a team of economic experts update our monthly forecasts and provide additional insights. We also provide metrics and analysis on labor supply and demand, as well as the human capital issues that help shape economies around the world.

Our indexes, forecasts and projections help policy makers and practitioners understand and anticipate economic shifts and developments that have a significant impact on society. We make sense of the most relevant economic data to help support their decision-making.



KNOWLEDGE SHARING

We provide our members with the information, tools, and relationship opportunities they need to operate most effectively at the intersection of business and society. Together, we identify the issues, set the agenda, and drive the dialogue of business leadership.

Non-profits are vital to all communities. The Conference Board provides forums for non-profits to convene and discuss the ideas, strategies, and challenges they face in their work. Non-profits provide important services to those in need in the humanitarian, health care, educational, environmental, and social service sectors, and at the same time face operational challenges similar to businesses: inadequate resources, lack of staff and funds, and unrealistic expectations.

Each year, leaders from dozens of major not-for-profit organizations address these challenges at numerous councils and conferences hosted by The Conference Board, informed by insights from both businesses and nonprofits. Our annual Business and Community Impact Conference is one such opportunity for leading organizations to discuss how they are making measurable positive impacts.

These forums provide non-profit leaders with ideas and insights that help them to address the world's most pressing challenges.



CONCLUSION

These activities help us achieve our dual mission: to equip the world's leading corporations with the practical knowledge they need to improve their performance and better serve society.

Ensuring our efforts are aligned with our members' priorities is critical to achieving this mission and ensuring that our efforts are effective and have an impact—on the business community and on society—is an aspiration that we endeavor to meet each year.

We hope this report is helpful in describing our work and offers those who benefit from our programs an opportunity to consider how our work could be improved further.

We encourage readers to explore the work of The Conference Board in these areas in greater depth on our website:

www.conferenceboard.org

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THE CONFERENCE BOARD, INC.

AMERICAS

+ 1 212 759 0900

customer.service@conferenceboard.org

ASIA

+ 65 6325 3121

service.ap@conferenceboard.org

EUROPE/AFRICA/MIDDLE EAST

+ 32 2 675 54 05

brussels@conferenceboard.org

THE CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA

+ 1 613 526 3280

www.conferenceboard.ca