This report represents CENTER FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT’s responses to Charting Impact, a joint project of BBB Wise Giving Alliance, GuideStar USA Inc, and Independent Sector. Charting Impact uses five simple yet powerful questions to encourage strategic thinking and help organizations share concise information about their plans and progress toward impact.

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Mission:
The Center for Global Development works to reduce global poverty and inequality through rigorous research and active engagement with the policy community to make the world a more prosperous, just, and safe place for us all. The policies and practices of the rich and the powerful—in rich nations, as well as in the emerging powers, international institutions, and global corporations—have significant impacts on the world’s poor people. We aim to improve these policies and practices through research and policy engagement to expand opportunities, reduce inequalities, and improve lives everywhere. By pairing research with action, CGD goes beyond contributing to knowledge about development. We conceive of and advocate for practical policy innovations in areas such as trade, aid, health, education, climate change, labor mobility, private investment, access to finance, and global governance to foster shared prosperity in an increasingly interdependent world. As a nimble, independent, ...
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1. What are we aiming to accomplish?

CGD works to reduce global poverty and inequality through rigorous, independent research and engagement with the policy community. The policies and practices of the rich and the powerful—in rich nations, as well as in emerging powers, international institutions, and global corporations—have significant impacts on the world's poor people. CGD aims to improve these policies and practices through economic research and policy engagement to expand opportunities, reduce inequalities, and improve lives everywhere.

2. What are our strategies for making this happen?

Since its founding in 2001, CGD's data-driven approach to new ideas has informed the practices and policies of a variety of development actors and institutions. The Center's reach stems from a unique formula of independent and empirical research, timely and tactical outreach to decision makers, practical experience within the policy world, and our staff's passion for our mission. The Center's research investigates the most pivotal issues of development policy, including migration, aid effectiveness and innovation; climate change; global governance; technology, global health and education; private investment and access to finance; and trade. CGD organizes work that is related to proposals for specific, practical policy improvements into initiatives, such as Development Impact Bonds, Cash-on-Delivery Aid, Commitment to Development Index (CDI), Europe Beyond Aid, and Tropical Forests for Climate and Development. Much of the Center's work is conducted by working groups of experts across disciplines who come together to find solutions to difficult policy challenges. Recent working groups include Unintended Consequences of Rich Countries' Anti-Money Laundering Policies on Poor Countries, the High Level Panel on the Future of Multilateral Development Banking, Energy Access Targets, and Value for Money: An Agenda for Global Health Funding Agencies. CGD continues to capitalize on its institutional strength and academic rigor—pillars that have allowed it to actively engage with policymakers and other leaders in the international development space. It works to ensure that CGD research products and policy recommendations help inform the views and actions of policymakers, advocates, and public-opinion leaders by providing timely policy analysis derived from independent, nonpartisan research.

3. What are our organization's capabilities for doing this?

CGD's senior researchers and other experts are intellectual leaders in the field of economic development policy, combining academic rigor and practical experience to reduce poverty and inequality. The Center's visiting and non-resident fellows contribute an added level of knowledge to CGD's work. Many are simultaneously employed at leading universities, institutions, and NGOs around the world. CGD also provides promising young researchers from developing countries an opportunity to work for one year at the Center as part of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) fellowship. CGD's complete staff listing includes policy analysts, program managers, communications professionals, and research assistants. The Center's growing Alumni Association links former staff, visiting fellows, and other associates, offering periodic updates on their diverse contributions to shared global prosperity after they leave CGD. CGD benefits from the support and guidance of an influential Board of Directors composed of prominent individuals from the public and private sectors with a passionate commitment to international development. Its Advisory Group of top-tier development economists, political scientists, and policymakers helps CGD maintain the high quality of its research and identify over-the-horizon issues for proactive detection. Additionally, CGD works with others through contractual and informal partnerships with a wide range of organizations who share complementary goals. CGD's position as an "insider-outsider"—an organization that understands the pressures, constraints, and systems of government policymaking while maintaining external independence and credibility—lends CGD a unique comparative advantage in its research and engagement with the policy community. Using this approach, CGD is well placed to gauge how to most effectively devote its resources at any given time depending on policy opportunities that arise. Overall, CGD devotes roughly 40 percent of its resources to longer term research and 60 percent to initiatives and immediate policy opportunities; this tilt toward work that is actionable in the nearer term reflects
4. How will we know if we're making progress?

Over the course of CGD's development as an institution, it has undergone two external reviews to help identify organizational strengths and weaknesses, and to discover where CGD could have greater impact. At the end of 2013, CGD publicly posted these two strategic reviews in the About CGD section of the Center's website. Following these two reviews, CGD has implemented lessons learned with the aim of more efficiently and clearly identifying what progress it is making toward the goal of reducing global poverty and inequality. CGD has also experimented with more deliberate methods for measuring its real-world impact and influence through two internal tracking systems. In 2011, CGD took the opportunity of its 10th Anniversary to reassess its methods and reaffirm its priorities moving forward by engaging with Redstone Strategy Group to conduct a strategic review and evaluation, which focused primarily on how to evaluate the Center's impact and influence and how to communicate CGD's value to external audiences. CGD and Redstone jointly developed an experimental Expected Return (ER) exercise, a tool that was adapted to the particular think-tank model of Research→Policy Change→Real World Outcomes. The tool's central purpose is to assist in the process of measuring and tracking CGD's impact in meeting its mission of making the world a more fair and prosperous place. Following two pilot periods, the ER Tracker has gradually been integrated in CGD's existing evaluation structures, and has been useful in assessing the relative effectiveness of its initiatives and programs. CGD's communications team has also updated and revamped its internal Impacts and Influence Database on the Center's intranet in 2012. This database is a complement to the ER exercise, but one that also captures smaller impacts like media citations, congressional testimonies, briefings to high-level officials, publications, dialogue with policymakers, and more.

5. What have and haven't we accomplished so far?

CGD has earned a reputation as a "think and do" tank, where independent research is channeled into practical policy proposals that help to shape decisions in rich-country capitals and international financial institutions. In over a decade, CGD has, with a unique combination of rigorous and data-driven analysis, strategic opportunism, and savvy outreach, moved a number of ideas to action. The Center has informed and shaped a number of policies of international financial institutions, the G-8 and G-20, and various governments. Thanks to CGD's approach of melding empirical research with timely nonpartisan policy outreach, it has been able to develop pragmatic policy recommendations to tackle global challenges such as climate change, poor schooling, energy poverty, trade barriers, immigration restrictions, and money laundering and tax avoidance. CGD has put on the global agenda—and sometimes helped to drive to implementation—proposals to accelerate vaccine development; to permit migration as a tool in disaster recovery; to write down $18 billion in Nigerian debt; to make the World Bank more effective, accountable, and legitimate; and to create a new international institution for independent evaluation of poverty-reduction efforts. Policy change takes time, however, and since its founding in 2001, CGD has persistently identified pragmatic steps that can facilitate the process of moving evidence-based research and policy recommendations into measurable impact. As the international development landscape has evolved over the past decade, so has CGD—its cadre of scholars, experts, and allies continually stay abreast of these changes and proactively develop frameworks for step-by-step policy solutions. By conducting independent economic research on development issues, CGD helps produce the building blocks and momentum necessary to make the policies and practices of rich institutions and governments better, safer, and more humane.