

Why strong business leads to strong communities

Written by

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Like fashion and design, education should be accessible to everyone, Target executive Laysha Ward said.

"Successful businesses and successful communities are inextricably linked," Ward said. "Target democratized design; now we're working to democratize education, because we know that our future success, and that of the global economy, depends on an educated workforce."

Ward's remarks were made June 13, at the third annual gathering of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) America

As part of a panel session about achieving economic and social mobility moderated by Clinton, Ward, Target's president of Community Relations (pictured above, center), shared her thoughts on the importance of public/private partnerships to drive social impact and create shared economic and societal value, centered around critical areas like education, healthcare, and workforce development. She was joined on the panel by Sara Martinez Tucker, chief executive officer of the National Math + Science Initiative; Hamdi Ulukaya, founder and CEO of Chobani, Inc.; and Eva Longoria, actress, advocate and founder of the The Eva Longoria Foundation. in Chicago. The event, hosted by former President Bill Clinton, founder of the organization, focuses on finding solutions that promote economic recovery in the United States.

"We have to quit hiding behind rocks and get moving." Clinton agreed.

"As part of our legacy of giving, Target gives 5 percent of our profit, which totals more than \$4 million, to communities every week," Laysha continued. "Those dollars go toward fighting hunger, aiding disaster preparedness and relief efforts, supporting the arts and putting more kids on the path to high school graduation."

Why the focus on education? "Every child can learn and should be given the opportunity to reach their full potential," she said. "To make sure we're helping to provide the right tools and resources to help more kids succeed, we've set goals in the area of education, including a commitment to give \$1 billion for education by the end of 2015."

Ward also spoke about the importance of common core standards as well as the need to embrace technology. "We need to allow technology to be a game-changer," she said.

Target said it became a member of CGI in 2013, "because we strongly support its mission of

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taking action to drive change. As part of our membership, we'll be announcing a specific commitment to action in September at the annual CGI meeting. Watch for more information in coming months," the Minneapolis based retailer said in a press release.

[Check out the video](#) to watch the full panel discussion.

Visit CGIAmerica.org to learn more about the event, follow hashtag [#CGIAmerica](#) to see the buzz on Twitter and Instagram, and visit [Education](#) to learn more about the programs and partners Target supports.