

## Tesco eliminates poverty and violence through fresh fruit

Global CSR Leadership

People often can't see what they have and they only see what they don't have. Each morning, waking up, breathing, drinking clean water, eating fresh vegetables and healthy foods, going to work somewhere and learning something new. Only people who are deprived of the benefits of these normal everyday things know their true importance and value.

5. Tesco

There is a company that influences every part of people's lives: from the necessities of ordinary citizens such as food, clothing and housing, to providing opportunities for long-term unemployed people. UK based Tesco, one of the world's largest retailers, carries this responsibility by creating values in economic, social and cultural dimensions. Tesco operates over 5,000 stores in 14 countries, employs over 500,000 people and influences millions of customers' daily lives.

Jason Saul, the founder & CEO of Mission Measurement LLC and a professor of the Kellogg School of Management, highly praised Tesco's 'Fresh & Easy' store in his book, "Social Innovation Inc". In this book he cites Tesco as one of the best examples of a corporation that solves social problems through corporate business solutions.

Even within a developed country like the United States, there are still many inner-city ghettoes and other areas that don't have ready access to healthy foods. The local residents have to travel long distances to get fresh fruits and vegetables. Shops around the areas only sell fast foods and dehydrated foods – these are the so called 'food deserts'. The situation in these ghettos places a huge burden on the United States as it tries to battle health-welfare problems such as childhood obesity, medical insurance, and inadequate health care etc.

Tesco has opened several small-scale 'Fresh & Easy' stores, within food deserts in Phoenix, Las Vegas and Southern California. These stores are one eighth the size of competing stores, but play the role of oases in the food desserts by selling fresh and healthy foods. Through their 'Fresh & Easy' stores, Tesco was able to offer a solution to complex social problems including providing slum area customer's with access to healthy foods, reducing the state governments' health policy worries, and improving the perceptions of US residents towards multinational retailers. Additionally, Tesco was able to develop an untapped market that had been abandoned like an orphan, and created an opportunity for generating profits, innovation and growth.

Tesco also opened 43 'Fresh & Easy' stores in Compton, California, which is regarded as a cradle of poverty and street crime. The stores had the effect of killing many birds with one stone: they solved the 'food desert' problems, created jobs and helped vitalize the regional economy, etc. This innovative public private partnership project is regarded as one of the most successful urban redevelopment projects that the Compton city mayor took up in direct partnership with Tesco.

In addition, Tesco provides vocational training and jobs for disabled and long-term unemployed people through their 'Regeneration Partnership' program. This has revitalized the local economy in British provincial cities such as Oldham, Litherland, Liverpool and Hodge Hill. Tesco makes job opening announcements through non-profit organizations, the media and job centers in provincial cities.



Tesco also helps applicants use their job support hotline and provides an eightweek job training course to the unemployed and the disabled.

Distribution jobs in Regeneration Partnership stores are given to the people who have successfully completed their job training. When they excel, they are promoted to customer service jobs and even higher positions as they gain experience. Over 80% of staff who are employed in this way, are local residents who are able to commute to the stores on foot. Since 1999, Tesco has generated over 4000 jobs in 35 stores.

Philip Clarke, CEO of Tesco said ...businesses like Tesco, which live and breathe in the very heart of communities, have a particular responsibility. I am the first to believe that there is always more we can do." Tesco has also been providing cultural opportunities through Schools of Extended Education in stores in the Republic of Korea, Turkey and China. Tesco has been always at the forefront of buying and selling ecofriendly products and partnering with suppliers. Tesco's "Community Promises" can be called an ordinary but special opportunity to help people who were not able to have normal lives.

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