Private Utilities and Poverty Alleviation

Market Initiatives at the Base of the Pyramid

Edited by Patricia Márquez, Associate Professor of Management and Director, Center for Peace and Commerce, University of San Diego and Carlos Rufín, Associate Professor of International Business and Director, Global Business Program, Sawyer Business School, Suffolk University

Drawing on cases from electricity distribution and other infrastructure industries, and from experiences spanning Asia, Africa and Latin America, this book examines new business models to bring basic utility services to the four billion people comprising the base of the socio-economic pyramid.

Throughout the world, people continue to suffer severe electricity shortages and lack potable water. Contributors to this work, who include academics and practitioners from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, USAID, the AES Corporation and several academic institutions, show that access to utilities is key for achieving economic growth and improving the lives of citizens worldwide. They offer analyses of business models in utilities serving the bottom of the pyramid (BOP) through market mechanisms and showcase innovations in organizational processes and services in order to effectively reach the BOP. The book also discusses the key factors in developing profitable business ventures that can engage the world’s four billion poor.

The book is aimed at both academics with an interest in applied research in business and the role of markets in servicing the poor worldwide, practitioners, public sector organizations and NGOs engaged in supplying, financing, and managing microcredit and market initiatives with low-income sectors, and international utility companies and other firms seeking to expand in emerging markets. In addition, the book will be useful as a text in a variety of courses and will give readers a deeper understanding of the potential for business to alleviate poverty, as well as inspire a deeper involvement in social issues as a career alternative or voluntary activity.


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Contents & Contributors

1. Introduction: Utilities at the Base of the Pyramid
   Patricia Márquez and Carlos Rufín

2. Reaching Scale: Utilities as Platforms to Provide Opportunities for the Majority
   Francisco Mejía

3. The Innovative Use of Mobile Telephony in the Philippines – Lessons for Africa
   Shawn Mendes

4. Information and Communications Technologies and the Base of the Pyramid: Lessons from the Philippines’ Last Mile Initiative
   Gigo Alampay

5. Power Distribution in Argentina: Are the Strategies for the Base of the Pyramid Actually BOP Strategies?
   Miguel Angel Gardetti

6. Prepaid Meters in Electricity: A Cost–Benefit Analysis
   Ariel Casarin and Luciana Nicoller

7. Challenges and Opportunities in Electricity Service Provision for Urban BOP Communities
   Simone Lawaetz and Connie Smyser

8. Delivering Utility Services to the Poor Using Output-Based Aid Approaches
   Patricia Veevers-Carter and Cathy Russell

9. A Utility’s Perspective on Assisting BOP Communities: The AES Corporation’s Experience
   Scarlett Álvarez and Francisco Morandi

10. One Step Toward Citizenship: The Slum Electrification and Loss Reduction Pilot Project in São Paulo, Brazil
    Ivar Petersson

11. Conclusions: Providing Utilities to the Poor
    Patricia Márquez and Carlos Rufín

References